

Heseltine resigns over Westland and accuses Thatcher

Prime Minister 'sabotaged rescue'

Tories split by unprecedented public argument

By Richard Evans, Lobby Reporter

The Conservative Party was split from top to bottom last night over the resignation of its most charismatic Cabinet member - leaving opponents of the Government with a propaganda gift.

But as leaders of the Alliance and Labour parties took advantage of the government's turmoil, senior politicians across the political spectrum, past and present, were agreed that the extraordinary events which led up to Mr Heseltine's departure, with Cabinet minister openly against Cabinet minister, are unprecedented in this century.

Lord Howe of the Isles, the former Prime Minister, told *The Times*: "I can recall resignations of course, on an issue like Suez, but I cannot recall any parallel to this. I have been surprised how the issue took such a dramatic turn."

And Lord Wilson of Rievaulx, who led the Labour Party to four general election victories, commented: "I don't recall anything like it - and I had my own problems! It is much more public than anything that happened in my time. Can you imagine it happening in Clem Attlee's time?"

Sir Humphrey Atkins, senior Tory backbencher and chair-



Thatcher regret over the lonely rebel

The Prime Minister last night wrote to Mr Michael Heseltine accepting his resignation as Secretary of State for Defence, although he did not submit a formal letter. This is the text of her letter:

Dear Michael,

It was with great regret that I accepted your decision to leave the Cabinet and the Government.

I was very glad that you supported this morning our decision to reaffirm the policy that it is for the Westland company to decide the course to follow in the best interests of the company and its employees. It was therefore a matter for regret that you alone in being unable to accept the Cabinet's decision on how to give practical effect to that policy by interdepartmental clearance of all answers to questions addressed to Ministers during this period of sensitive commercial negotiations and decisions.

I want to thank you for your contribution to the work of Conservative Governments over the years. Your career in

man of the Commons defence select committee which backed Mr Heseltine's approach over Westland, said: "People have resigned from Cabinets before, of course. I did myself... but never before were resignations preceded by all this public argument between Cabinet ministers - that is unprecedented."

Mr Neil Kinnock, the Labour leader, seized on Mr Heseltine's departure, and his blow-by-blow resignation press conference, to prepare a full-scale parliamentary offensive against Mrs Thatcher.

It was now essential "as a matter of honour and duty" for the Prime Minister to make a full statement to the Commons on Monday about the circumstances and manner of the resignation, the future of Westland, and the policy of the Government on clear matters of national defence and industrial interest, he said.

"We will ensure that there is no possibility of the Prime Minister evading the questions that must now be asked."

Dr David Owen, the SDP leader, said Mr Heseltine's resignation represented a devastating personal indictment of

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Portfolio

There were two winners of yesterday's £2,000 Times Portfolio competition. Mr J. R. K. Doherty of London and Mrs Pauline Sagar of Sheffield each receive £1,000. Portfolio list, page 14, how to play, information service, back page.

Jobless up 14,700 to 3.18 million

Unemployment rose unexpectedly last month, upsetting the favourable trend of recent months. The adult jobless total rose 14,700 to 3.18 million. Lord Young of Gifford, the Employment Secretary, described the figures as "disappointing". The unadjusted unemployment total was 3,373,089, up 14,221, and could rise by around 100,000 this month.

Pound boosted by rate rise

The pound, buoyed by Britain's higher level of interest rates, rose nearly 3 cents to \$1.4710 in early New York trading after gaining two-thirds of a cent to \$1.4490 in London.

Out of picture

Kodak stopped production of instant cameras and films, writing off tens of millions of dollars in investment, after losing a nine-year court battle with Polaroid.

Killer detained

A woman who drowned her son while on probation for the infanticide of his two brothers, was ordered to be detained indefinitely in a mental hospital.

£70m grants

The Greater London Council is believed to be planning to transfer £70 million to voluntary organisations as forward funding for selected projects before it is abolished on March 31.

Leisurely life

With average male employees working 38.2 hours a week and enjoying at least four weeks' holiday, Britons have more leisure than 10 years ago.

Expulsion plea

Spain has suspended an expulsion order against a Briton wanted for questioning about the £26 million Brink's-Mat bullion robbery at Heathrow airport, pending an appeal by his lawyers.

US post purge

Mr Paul Carlin has been dismissed as United States Postmaster-General in a move expected to lead to a management purge and cost-cutting measures in the postal service.

Series halted

Work on an American television drama series depicting the United States under Russian rule after a KGB coup has been halted.

TV licence plea

Extra television licences for people with video recorders and more than one set could solve the BBC's financing problems, the corporation suggested.

Division healed

The threat of a breakaway "Super League" by leading first division clubs has receded following an agreement by second division chairmen to the proposed restructuring of the Football League.

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Mr Michael Heseltine walked out of a Cabinet meeting and resigned as Secretary of State for Defence, accusing the Prime Minister of sabotaging an Anglo-European rescue attempt of Westland.

Cabinet colleagues were taken by surprise at the manner in which Mr Heseltine left after the Prime Minister had summed up a discussion on Westland.

Mr George Younger, Mr Heseltine's successor, reaffirmed the Government's policy of leaving it to Westland shareholders to decide the helicopter company's fate.

By Anthony Bevin, Political Correspondent

Mr Michael Heseltine walked out of a Cabinet meeting yesterday, resigning as Secretary of State for Defence, and then publicly accused the Prime Minister of stalling and sabotaging attempts to launch an Anglo-European rescue attempt for the Westland helicopter company.

In an unprecedented, dramatic and highly charged exposure of the working of modern cabinet government, he told an official press conference at the Ministry of Defence that the Government was not pursuing its self-proclaimed policy of even-handedness towards two Westland bids.

He alleged that Mr Leon Brittan, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, had on Wednesday night put "national interest" pressure on British Aerospace to withdraw from the Anglo-European consortium; that promised cabinet level discussions on the implications of Westland had been cancelled at short notice; that there had been an unprecedented error and part-correction of a cabinet minute on Westland discussion in the Cabinet on December 12; and that there had been a New Year's Eve meeting at which alterations had been "hammered" into a draft letter from Mrs Margaret Thatcher which would otherwise have been "materially misleading".

Mr Heseltine, at times hesitant and nervous, concluded his 23-minute statement, saying: "To serve as a member of a Tory Cabinet within the constitutional understandings and practices of a system under which the Prime Minister is primus inter pares is a memory I will always treasure."

"But if the basis of trust between the Prime Minister and her Defence Secretary no longer exists, there is no place for me with honour in such a Cabinet."

The resignation is the most flamboyant since Mr George Younger's in 1958.

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Brown left the Wilson Cabinet in 1968, but was even more sensational in its way than the resignations of Lord Salisbury and Mr Peter Thorneycroft from the Macmillan Administration in 1958.

Mr Heseltine has been a "closet wet", confining his criticism of government policy to the Cabinet table, since Mrs Thatcher took office. He told friends in the wake of Lord Stockton's recent remarks that the Government was not selling the silver; it was getting rid of the hardware furniture.

His resignation will provoke

an almighty Commons storm when the House reconvenes on Monday, with Mr Neil Kinnock demanding a statement from the Prime Minister, along with a full-dress debate on the issues involved.

Mrs Thatcher is bound to take the view that she is saddened by Mr Heseltine's going, but that it is a "little local difficulty", the Macmillan refusal of 1958. Certainly, talk of Mr Heseltine becoming the focus of revolt is belied by the ineffectiveness in the Commons of backbench Tory dissidents.

But Mr Heseltine's fervent belief in the cause of the Anglo-European bid for a Westland stake, backed by the uniquely powerful ammunition of his inside knowledge, could make him a key factor in the Westland shareholders' meeting scheduled for next Tuesday.

The speed with which Mrs Thatcher announced the succession - with Mr George Younger moving from the Scottish Office to defence, and Mr Malcolm Rifkin from the foreign office to the Scottish office - was seen by some as fast footwork or premeditation.

There was no letter from Mr Heseltine to the Prime Minister, and the Department of Trade and Industry last night refused to be drawn on Mr Brittan's alleged remarks to Sir Raymond Lygo, of British Aerospace.

Successor pledges to fall in line

By George Hill and Ronald Faux

At his first press conference as Secretary of State for Defence, Mr George Younger yesterday reaffirmed the Government's policy of leaving it to Westland shareholders to decide the company's fate, and declared his readiness to submit his own statements on the issue for the approval of his colleagues.

"I am entirely happy with the Government's decision that this is a matter for the company's shareholders alone, and that there will be no pressure from the Government either for or against the bid," he said.

"We want to do all we can to encourage collaboration in Europe, but that is not an issue now in the Westland case."

"I will not say anything about the issue that will not be approved by my colleagues. I believe in Cabinet responsibility and I'm very glad to subscribe to the principle. I am used to



Mr Younger at his press conference yesterday.

having statements vetted by the Cabinet Office."

Mr Younger said that Mr Heseltine's resignation was a very sad event in the history of the Government and that it would be greatly regretted. In the longer term, however, he did not expect that there would be any significant effect on the Government.

Mr Younger said that Mrs Thatcher had not approached him about the defence job before Mr Heseltine resigned. Asked to describe the scene in Cabinet in the morning, he said: "There is thing to describe. A point came when Mr Heseltine said that he was not able to subscribe to the Cabinet view, and he got up and left. He didn't say 'I resign'. The Prime Minister said that she was extremely sorry."

Later, Mr Younger said, he was called in by the Prime Minister during an intermission in the Cabinet meeting, and offered the job.

Mr Younger, aged 54, heir to the third Viscount Younger of Leckie, moved towards politics in 1959 when he contested North Lanarkshire. At the time he was still serving in The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

He was Unionist candidate for Kinross and West Perthshire in 1963 but stood down in favour of Sir Alec Douglas Home.

The gesture was characteristic of the man, but the next year he won Ayr for the Tories and has held the seat since.

Cabinet stunned by surprise walk-out

By Anthony Bevin, Political Correspondent

Cabinet colleagues were taken completely by surprise at the manner of Mr Michael Heseltine's going.

After the Prime Minister had summed up a one-hour discussion on the Westland affair, he said that he could not accept that his previous statements should now be vetted by the Cabinet Office.

He told last night's Ministry of Defence Press conference: "I could not accept the summing up and I had, therefore, to leave."

He did just that. Gathering up his papers, he walked behind Mr Norman Fowler, Secretary of State for the Environment, and the Cabinet room.

Ministers were so stunned that the Prime Minister, after a further 15 minutes of discussion on Westland and foreign affairs, called a Cabinet adjournment during which she told Mr George Younger that he should succeed Mr Heseltine.

The Cabinet had begun at 10am with all present except Lord Hailsham of St Marylebone, the Lord Chancellor, who was abroad.

With the Prime Minister sitting at the centre of the Cabinet table, with her back to the fireplace, flanked by Sir Robert Armstrong, Cabinet Secretary, on her right, and Lord Whitelaw, her deputy, on her left, the discussion began with a round-up of forthcoming government business in the Commons, including next week's second reading debates

on the Public Order Bill and the Financial Services Bill.

But Monday, and the return of the Commons from its Christmas break, was bound to open Opposition demands for a Westland statement; defence questions are down for Tuesday and Trade and Industry is to be questioned on Wednesday.

Mrs Margaret Thatcher began the Westland discussion by rehearsing the Government's existing line seeking an even-handed approach to Westland, with the shareholders being left to take the final decision unimpaired by government interference.

That original decision, taken by the Cabinet on December 19, had been broken by Mr Heseltine in the eyes of Mrs Thatcher, who wanted to reassert Cabinet collective responsibility.

She invited Mr Leon Brittan, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, sitting opposite, to give his views. An implacable opponent of Mr Heseltine in the Westland affair, he left no doubts about his view that central co-ordination was necessary.

Mr Heseltine, to the left of Mr Brittan and Sir Keith Joseph, again facing the Prime Minister, was said to have supported an even-handed approach and the principle of collective Cabinet responsibility.

But after a further discussion, with interventions from Mr Norman Tebbit, the chairman of the Conservative

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4.4m shares in Westland are sold

Westland's share price leapt yesterday as a big buyer, reported to be the helicopter millionaire, Mr Alan Bristow, pieced together a large stake in the company with apparent intention of frustrating the deal with Sikorsky-Fiat (Patience Wheatcroft writes).

The buyer was offering 110p a share, against an opening market price of 78p, and several institutions found the offer too good to resist. They sold a total of 4.4 million shares, giving the buyer a 7½ per cent stake.

Mr Bristow was already one of the largest shareholders in the company, with close to a million shares, a legacy of his unsuccessful attempt to take over Westland last summer.

Mr Bristow has voiced his opposition to the Sikorsky deal and with a stake of this size he could have a crucial role in Tuesday's vote to approve the link. The chairman, Sir John Cuckney, needs to win 75 per cent of the votes to succeed in joining the Americans instead of the European consortium.

Last night M&G, one of the largest shareholders in Westland, with 7½ per cent, said that it had voted its stake in favour of the Sikorsky deal.

Among those who decided to sell their shares instead of staying with Westland is believed to be Allied Dunbar, an investment company which had voiced dissatisfaction with Sir John's refusal to put both the American and the European deals to shareholders.

Despite the wave of buying, the shares fell last night to close at 88p.

Breast cancer hopes 2,000 women in drug trials

By Thomson Prentice, Science Correspondent

A drug treatment that could prevent breast cancer is to be offered to women volunteers in an experimental project later this year.

Scientists at the Imperial Cancer Research Fund believe that the drug tamoxifen could reduce the number of women developing breast cancer by as much as 50 per cent.

About 14,000 women in Britain die each year from the disease. But research has shown that survival rates improve among breast cancer patients who have been treated with the drug, which lowers the level of the hormone oestrogen in their bodies.

"We cannot know in advance that this treatment is going to work among healthy women, but it would be the biggest step forward this century in breast cancer prevention if it did," Dr Jack Cuzick, one of the ICRF scientists said yesterday.

Dr Cuzick and colleagues at

the fund have published their proposals for the drug trial in today's issue of *The Lancet*.

The £2 million trial would involve 2,000 women volunteers taking the drug for five years while their health was monitored regularly.

Another 2,000 women, in the same age group of 50 to 70, would not be given the drug but would also be regularly examined to detect breast tumours. The incidence of breast cancer in the two groups would then be compared.

Tamoxifen has been used for many years to treat advanced cases of cancer. It works by regulating oestrogen levels, which are believed to stimulate tumour growth.

Recent results have indicated that the drug is also active in early disease, and that it reduces early mortality in breast cancer patients. "Given that it is effective in the established disease, it would be logical to

Gadaffi threatens to freeze US assets

From Robert Fisk, Tripoli, Libya

In a palace guarded by a dozen factory-fresh battle tanks, Colonel Gadaffi, the Libyan leader, last night threatened to freeze all American assets in Libya in response to President Reagan's economic sanctions against Tripoli.

But at the same time he carefully distanced himself from last month's terrorist attacks at Rome and Vienna airports, claiming that while he would allow Palestinians to undergo military training in his country, he "would not be responsible for their individual or suicidal acts".

The colonel, dressed in a purple shirt and sleeveless grey jacket, performed his careful sidestep at an hour-long press conference that contrived to be a warning to the United States, an attack on what he called the "state terrorism" of American leaders, and a trade of personal abuse against President Reagan.

The American leader, he said, was senile and his political

judgment affected by "the cancer in his stomach". Yet when I asked Colonel Gadaffi if his own personal prestige had been increased by his confrontation with the US, he replied: "Perhaps the American challenge has put extra responsibilities on me... the challenge was very useful."

Of the US sanctions, he said: "They deserve a response in kind - also an Arab and an international response at the same time. Libyan advisers are studying this very carefully now."

Colonel Gadaffi also expressed his confidence that West European nations would be able to fill the role of American oil technicians leaving Libya on Mr Reagan's instructions.

On the Rome and Vienna killings, the colonel was at times halting and evasive. When asked about evidence that the

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Heseltine tells of the lengthy battle over Westland

'Deliberate attempt made to avoid discussing issues'

Mr Michael Heseltine, in his press conference statement, said: "I have today tendered my resignation from the Government, not because of the discussion at today's Cabinet but because of the way in which the reconstruction of Westland plc has been handled over a period of months."

This has raised profound issues about defence procurement and Britain's future as a technologically advanced country, issues that have never been properly addressed by the Government. Indeed, as I shall show, a deliberate attempt has been made to avoid discussing them. This is not a proper way to carry on a government and ultimately not an approach for which I can share responsibility.

The background to the Government's policy on helicopter procurement is the 1978 declaration of principles agreed by France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. This provided that each country would make every effort to meet their needs with helicopters developed jointly in Europe.

That policy has thus far been followed through in our future planning. It is entirely consistent with the wider approach to defence procurement set out in the 1985 statement on the defence estimates which emphasized the importance of Europe coming together in an equal partnership with the United States within the North Atlantic alliance.

My own commitment to that alliance and to the strongest and most friendly relations with the United States on a basis of equality could not be clearer.

Lead role in early stages not mine

When Westland plc ran into financial difficulties, partially because of their failure on the civil market, this was not my immediate ministerial responsibility.

I am not the sponsoring minister for the helicopter industry. It would have been quite wrong for me to try to take the lead role in what was a DTI [Department of Trade and Industry] responsibility. It would have been wrong also for the Ministry of Defence alone to bail out the company with orders for which there was not an approved military requirement.

I did, however, make clear throughout that the helicopter capability provided by Westland was essential in some form to our defence needs.

When Sir John Cuckney, who had become the chairman of Westland with my full support and encouragement, first approached the Government about its attitude to potential partners for Westland, there was a close identity of view between the Ministry of Defence and the Department of Trade and Industry.

In view of this identity of view, it was still unnecessary for me to take any direct initiative.

It was recognized that with a Sikorsky shareholding, Westland might tend to become little more than a production facility for Sikorsky and to lose its own helicopter design and development capacity, that a link with European companies would fit better into the developing pattern of European collaboration and that, in many ways, British Aerospace would be the most welcome partner.

The need to explore urgently the European option was recommended by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in October 4.

Cuckney well aware of government views

When, on October 17, Sir John Cuckney met the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr Leon Brittan) he said that he was well aware of the Government's reference for a European minority shareholder in Westland and attached eight to that preference. The problem was how to bring this about in a timely way.

Over the following weeks there were a number of discussions involving both the European companies and Westland and contacts between European ministers.

I kept in close touch with these and with

the financial position of the company, at one stage I intervened to direct that the MoD's [Ministry of Defence] accounting officer should make a payment of £5 million to Westland that was correctly being withheld from them on grounds of prudent government accounting but that I was satisfied should be made because of the wider issues involved.

As time went on, I became increasingly concerned about progress in the discussions, particularly at a company level. On November 26, I met Sir John Cuckney and discussed with him where matters stood. He explained the need for urgent action and the strenuous participation by Sikorsky. However, he did not rule out other options provided that they had as much to offer as the Sikorsky alternative. His problem was that he lacked the management resources himself to explore them.

I asked if I could help, having already agreed with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry that this was acceptable. He welcomed my proposal that I should assist in this process.

For success, ministers had to be involved

The lessons of the negotiations over the European fighter aircraft were in my view clear: without ministerial involvement, it would be very difficult to achieve timely success.

I was not prepared to seek the support of my European ministerial colleagues, unless their efforts would be fairly and properly treated.

Since Sir John Cuckney had in no way ruled out the European alternative and welcomed my offer to explore it, I discussed it with Dr [Manfred] Wörner [West German Defence Minister] the following day and arranged that national armaments directors of the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy and France should meet on November 29, and that the companies involved should also come together that day.

The national armaments directors reached provisional agreement on the way forward, including a recommendation that, in an extension of the 1978 agreement, their needs within the main helicopter classes should be covered solely in the future by helicopters designed and built in Europe.

Ty also agreed to complete the rationalization of their requirement for helicopters, carrying forward the objectives set out in 1978. As soon as this agreement had been reached, I personally gave a copy to Sir John Cuckney.

Three meetings cleared by Prime Minister

Sir John Cuckney's response was that the agreement that had now been reached would effectively preclude Westland from proceeding with a tie-up with Sikorsky. The subsequent ministerial discussions took place only in the context of this issue, rather than the wider dimension of the Government's approach to the ownership of a major defence capability.

There were three ministerial meetings chaired by the Prime Minister at the beginning of December. Two of them ad hoc groups on December 4 and 5 and finally a discussion in the ministerial sub-committee on economic strategy on December 9.

The Prime Minister attempted at all three meetings to remove the recommendation of the national armaments directors and thus leave the way clear for the Sikorsky deal.

The ad hoc meetings were both ill tempered attempts to overcome the refusal of some colleagues to thus close off the European option.

The Prime Minister, failing to secure that preference, called a meeting of the sub-committee on economic strategy on December 9. I proposed that the ad hoc groups on December 4 and 5 and finally a discussion in the ministerial sub-committee on economic strategy on December 9.

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Mr Heseltine leaving Downing Street after his resignation

the enlarged meeting and thus came fresh to the arguments supported me, despite the fact that Sir John Cuckney had been invited to put his views to the meeting.

Time was limited and, as I have said, I was given to the following Friday to come up with such a proposal.

The Prime Minister clearly stated on that Monday that ministers would meet again to consider the result on Friday at 3pm after the Stock Exchange had closed.

There would thus be a further opportunity for colleagues to consider the outcome and to inform the board of their views if they wished. I was content. There was time. There would be further collective discussions.

The Cabinet office subsequently began arrangements for that meeting and a number of Whitehall departments were contacted about the availability of their minister.

These arrangements were, however, cancelled on the instructions of the Prime Minister. Having lost three times, there was to be no question of risking a fourth discussion.

As a result, the meeting on December 9 represents the only occasion on which there was a collective discussion of the issues involved, as opposed simply to the question of their public handling by the Government. By December 13, I produced proposals for ministerial agreements.

A complementary offer by the companies concerned to participate in the reconstruction of Westland was also made that day. They were not addressed collectively, but I circulated them to colleagues.

Following the decision not to proceed with the meeting on December 13, I sought on a number of occasions to have the issues properly addressed.

The first attempt had been at the Cabinet on Thursday December 12. The Prime Minister refused to allow a discussion in

Cabinet that day. I insisted that the Cabinet Secretary should record my protest in the Cabinet minutes.

When the minutes were circulated there was no reference to any discussion about Westland and consequently no record of my protest.

Before the next Cabinet meeting I complained to the Secretary of the Cabinet. He explained that the item had been omitted from the minutes as the result of an error and he subsequently circulated an addendum in the form of a brief note of the discussion. Such an error and correction was unprecedented in my experience.

The minutes, as finally issued, still did not record my protest and I have since informed the Secretary of the Cabinet that I am still not content with the way in which this discussion was recorded.

Westland rejects European proposals

The world is aware that on December 13 the board of Westland rejected, after the briefest discussion, the proposals put forward by a consortium which now included Britain's leading aerospace company, British Aerospace plc.

On December 16 the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry made a statement to the House that, since the Westland board had rejected the British/European consortium proposals, the Government was not bound by the NADS [National Armaments Directors] recommendation. Effectively he thereby left the way clear for the Sikorsky/Flat bid.

There followed increasing concern over the defence implications of this decision. The officers of the backbench defence committee of the Conservative Party put out a statement in support of the approach I was taking. I did not solicit that statement.

Subsequently, on December 18, the

House of Commons defence committee, following a private meeting with me, also drew attention to the defence implications. At the Cabinet discussion on December 19 there was again no attempt to address these fundamental issues.

It was laid down that it was the policy of the Government that it was for Westland to decide what was the best course to follow in the best interests of the company and its employees; that no minister was entitled to lobby in favour of one proposal rather than another; and that major issues of defence

procurement were for collective decision. Information about the implications of defence procurement for Westland's workload should be made equally available to both groups as well as to Westland.

I explicitly explained at that meeting that, as the Ministry of Defence was the major customer of Westland, I was bound to answer questions whether from UT/Flat or from the European consortium about defence procurement aspects.

I also drew attention to the fact that I believed that on the following day events would unfold that demanded collective judgement. I knew at the time, but could not prove, that the British/European proposals would appear next day.

I therefore told the Cabinet that, while it was acceptable that Thursday for the Government to adopt an apparently neutral approach, events would shortly unfold which would demand collective judgement.

Events did so unfold. The following day, December 20, the British/European consortium put forward an offer to Westland that was widely described as superior in every way to the Sikorsky/Flat alternative. It was rejected out of hand by the Westland board.

Cuckney letter to Prime Minister

I wrote on December 23 to my colleagues setting out my views on the implications of both offers and their comparative merits and asking that the Government should exercise its proper responsibility on so important a matter of defence industrial policy.

I explicitly recognized that the holiday period was a difficult time for such a judgement. But before the directors came out with a final recommendation last Sunday, it would still have been possible for the Government to meet and to restate the preferences so clearly expressed at the outset. My request for a meeting was refused by the Prime Minister.

Two further events must be recorded. Sir John Cuckney wrote on December 30 to the Prime Minister seeking assurances about the position of the company should they proceed with a Sikorsky/Flat link.

These assurances were sought directly in relation to a letter sent by the Ministry of Defence at my direction to the company. The fundamental issue raised by Sir John Cuckney related to defence procurement issues for which I was the Secretary of State with the individual ministerial responsibility in the proper conduct of government business. Sir John's letter would have been referred to my department for advice and a draft reply.

In this case, the Prime Minister's private secretary sent the letter to the Department of Trade and Industry and asked for a draft reply, cleared as appropriate with other departments and the law officers.

He asked for it to be submitted by 4pm the following day. The letter from 10 Downing Street set out the line which the Prime Minister proposed to take.

When I received my copy of the letter the following morning, I pointed out that these were matters within my ministerial responsibility, but the letter was not transferred to my department for answer.

I also pointed out that the line which the Prime Minister proposed to take was manifestly misleading.

The Department of Trade and Industry prepared a draft reply which was referred to the law officers only at my express request. A reply with which all concerned could live was eventually hammered out at about 10pm on New Year's Eve.

I subsequently amplified those parts of the reply that sought to hide the reality of Westland's position in relation to potential European partners and prospects for orders from the Ministry of Defence in the medium term, in a letter of January 3 to Lloyds Merchant Bank, which I copied to Sir John Cuckney.

Letter is sent by the Solicitor General

I was informed the following day by the Solicitor General that, on the basis of the evidence which he had thus far seen, my letter contained material inaccuracies. He wrote to me in this sense on Monday January 6.

Within two hours of my receiving his letter, damaging selective passages had been leaked to the Press Association. I cannot comment on the source of these leaks on which there will no doubt be a full inquiry in the normal way. No one can doubt their purpose.

I subsequently on January 6 set out to the Solicitor General some of the further evidence at my disposal about the attitude of other governments and other companies and informed Lloyds Merchant Bank by letter on that day that my answer needed no correction.

The Government, in its official position, has sought to suggest that it has adopted an even-handed approach between the viable offers. In practice throughout, the attempt has been made to remove any obstacles to the offer by Sikorsky/Flat, even to the extent to changing existing government policy.

Although, as I explained earlier, at the outset there was a clear recognition of the attractions of involvement by Aerospace, I understand that last night the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, in the presence of another minister in his department and his officials, told Sir Raymond Lygo of British Aerospace that the role which British Aerospace were taking in the European consortium was against the national interest and that British Aerospace should withdraw.

So much for the wish of the sponsoring department to leave the matter to the shareholders on the basis of the most attractive choice available to them.

Finally, we come to today's Cabinet. It was suggested that any questions in connection with the competing offers for Westland should be referred by all ministers to the Cabinet Office to be handled by them in the first instance.

I refused to abandon my assurances

To have done so would have been to imply doubt and delay in any and every part of the assurances I had publicly given on behalf of my ministry and of my European colleagues. Such a procedure would have allowed the advocates of the Sikorsky proposals to make mayhem over what is now the superior British/European offer.

While I agreed that all new policy issues could be referred to the Cabinet Office, I refused to abandon or qualify in any way assurances I have given or my right as the responsible minister to answer questions on defence procurement issues in line with policies my colleagues have not contradicted.

The Prime Minister properly summed up the view of Cabinet that all answers should be referred for collective clearance. I could not accept that constraint in the critical few days before the Westland shareholders decide. I had no choice but to accept or to resign. I left the Cabinet.

To be Secretary of State for Defence in a Tory Government is one of the highest distinctions one can achieve.

To serve as a member of a Tory Cabinet within the constitutional understandings and practices of a system under which the Prime Minister is premiss inter pares is a memory I will always treasure.

But if the basis of trust between the Prime Minister and her Defence Secretary no longer exists, there is no place for me with honour in such a Cabinet.

Charisma that lost out to obduracy

By Rodney Cowton
Defence Correspondent

The Westland controversy that culminated yesterday in the resignation of Mr Michael Heseltine as Secretary of State for Defence was a situation which, from his point of view, got out of control.

When in November he began assembling his European consortium he must have thought that with Westland's three main European competitors, and above all their governments, lined up in support, Westland would be unable to resist their rescue offer.

What he seems not to have reckoned with was the obduracy of Sir John Cuckney, Westland's chairman who, like Mr Heseltine, is an old boy of Shrewsbury School. Without Sir John's unwavering preference for the Sikorsky offer the frantic activity and the bitter political warfare of the past few weeks would not have arisen.

Return to home base

Before he moved to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office three years ago, Mr Malcolm Rifkind was regarded as a front runner to succeed Mr George Younger (Ronald Fairs writes). There was little surprise at the Scottish Office yesterday that he had been invited back.

The MP for Edinburgh, Pentlands is aged 39 and will probably be the youngest member of the Cabinet and the youngest man to hold the century-old office of Secretary of State for Scotland.

At home in Edinburgh yesterday, where he was regarded as the most significant honour and responsibility which any Scottish MP could be asked to accept, Mr Younger, he said, would be "a hard act to follow".

Mr Rifkind graduated in law at Edinburgh University. Before entering Parliament he

With a more amenable chairman at Westland, Mr Heseltine could reasonably have expected that the qualities which had served him well during his three years at the Ministry of Defence, charm, energy and ruthless determination, would have seen him through on this occasion.

Mr Heseltine's qualities have been readily apparent at Defence. He has enjoyed open discussion of issues in his office, usually sitting on a settee with his feet up, and wearing a dark blue long-sleeved pullover.

When going into a hall to deliver a speech he would briefly agonize over whether it would be so warm that he should remove the pullover from under his jacket. Doing so, he would say, would be "a bit of a strip-tease".

He has little side, and when he had a formal engagement, he could on occasion, be seen arriving at the ministry carrying his morning suit on a coat hanger.

practised as an advocate in the City. He became a QC last year.

He is quick-thinking and highly articulate, occasionally too articulate for lobby reporters, who have timed his delivery at more than 200 words a minute.

His last job at The Scottish Office was Minister for Home Affairs and the Environment. In his dealings with Scottish local authorities with responsibility for local government finance, he was able to deliver disagreeable advice on behalf of the government and yet retain the respect of the councils, a quality he shares with Mr Younger.

Some observers questioned Mr Rifkind's ready acceptance of the Scottish Office. He had developed a specialist interest in European affairs at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and was clearly well thought of

He has boundless energy. On a visit to the Falkland Islands two years ago, with an almost impossibly crowded itinerary, he insisted on two occasions getting up at dawn to visit colonies of terns and penguins.

These human qualities are, however, matched by a degree of determination that can lead to him riding rough-shod over people. In 1984 when he was planning the reorganization of the central defence staffs, he told the then Chief of the Defence Staff, Field Marshal Sir Edwin Bramall, of his intentions only two days before publishing them.

When his mind is made up he can be abrupt with those who dissent. "That is the way it is, air marshal".

The prospect of his appointment to the ministry was not welcomed by the armed Forces, and although he has readily commanded the respect of most of those who had to work most closely with him, and perhaps,

Heavy defence workload ahead for Younger

Mr George Younger will find a very full in-tray awaiting him when he takes up his appointment of Secretary of State for Defence (Rodney Cowton writes).

That he should come to this job just now is ironic, for it was only last week that he suffered a severe political defeat at the hands of Mr Heseltine, and the Ministry of Defence, with the announcement that contracts for four submarines were to be placed with the Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering group for construction on Merseyside and at Barrow-in-Furness. Mr Younger, as Secretary of State for Scotland, had fought to ensure that at least one of them would be built north of the border.

Among the matters which

somewhat grudgingly, from a wider circle as well, there are many who remain fundamentally hostile to him.

There is a well-developed feeling that in his pursuit of efficiency, and his attempts to squeeze the maximum benefit from the resources devoted to defence he has caused unreasonable demands to be made on rank-and-file servicemen.

His three years at Defence fall into two clear phases: first a period of more than two years when most things seemed to go his way, and then during the course of last year the development of the job into a dull, hard slog to maintain existing defence policy within increasingly severe financial constraints.

Although he was not ministerially involved in the Falklands conflict, he went to Defence six months after the Argentine surrender when a grateful Prime Minister and nation were happy to lavish largesse on the Armed Forces.

Finance: The annual allocation of budgeted resources in the long-term costings is reaching a crucial stage. There is the need to determine priorities, in particular for 1987-88 and 1988-89, when the defence budget will rise by only 1.6 per cent and 0.9 per cent respectively. This means that for the first time under Mrs Thatcher's Government there will be an actual decline in the real value of the defence budget.

Nimrod Airborne Early Warning Aircraft: Critical negotiations are in progress between GEC and the Secretary of State to find a way of completing, at acceptable cost, this disastrous project which is at least five years late and has so far cost about £1 billion.

Tories split

Continued from page 1

Mrs Thatcher and "confirms one's worst suspicions of her autocratic, dictatorial style."

"Suppressing independent advice, manipulating Cabinet sub-committees, refusing collective discussion and rewriting Cabinet minutes is damning evidence of a total contempt for democratic Cabinet government."

At last someone has been man enough to stand up to her," he added.

Mr Alan Bell, deputy leader of the Liberal Party, said Mr Heseltine had lifted the lid on what went on in Mrs Thatcher's Cabinet. It showed the government was run on an autocratic basis with the Cabinet Office serving "as the means of enforcing the Prime Minister's will".

Within the Conservative party last night opinion was sharply divided over Mr Heseltine's conduct, and its likely effect on Mrs Thatcher and her Government.

At one extreme, Mr Michael Mates, Conservative MP for Hampshire, East and Mr Heseltine's closest confidant during the Westland saga, said the Defence Secretary's position had been made impossible by yesterday's Cabinet meeting, and resignation was the only honourable course.

"The fact it has ended like this can only be damaging for the Government; there is no question about it."

On the other hand, Sir Richard Body, Conservative MP for Hants and Mr Heseltine's "great majority" within the Conservative party had looked very unfavourably upon the way Mr Heseltine had behaved in recent weeks.

"There I have been in touch with for some time mediating. There are more edifying ways of trying to become Prime Minister."

European group will press on with offer

By Edward Townsend, Industrial Correspondent

The Anglo-European consortium, led by the General Electric Company and British Aerospace, yesterday reaffirmed its intention to press ahead with its offer for Westland despite the resignation.

Mr David Horne, managing director of Lloyds Merchant Bank, which is advising the consortium, said he was dumbfounded by Mr Heseltine's move. Earlier, he said, Mr Heseltine had been "delighted" that we were so confident of winning.

Mr Horne and senior BAE officials said the resignation did not affect the commercial aspects of the offer.

The consortium, led by Sir Raymond Lygo, chief executive

of British Aerospace, has been increasingly confident this week that it has sufficient backing to force an adjournment of next week's Westland shareholders' meeting, thereby forcing the board to put the European offer to them.

Westland's chief executive, Mr Hugh Stewart, said he was "rather surprised" by the resignation but hoped the company's future could be settled in economic rather than political terms.

Sir John Cuckney, Westland's chairman, declined to accept telephone calls about the resignation. "We do not want to comment on politics," a spokesman said.

Walk-out stuns Cabinet

Continued from page 1

Party, Mr Tom King, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, and Mr George Younger, Secretary of State for Scotland (until he replaced Mr Heseltine at 6pm last night) the Prime Minister summed up with her own proposals. Significantly, Lord Whitelaw, Mr John Biffen and Sir Geoffrey Howe chose not to speak in the Cabinet debate.

Mrs Thatcher wanted central co-ordination of all government responses on Westland. Mr Heseltine said he could accept that for new statements and issues, but demanded the right to re-state what he had

said earlier. That was rejected by the Prime Minister.

Mr Heseltine did not even say that he was resigning. His first statement was made to television and press cameramen outside Downing Street. "I have resigned," he said. "I think it would be wrong for me to say any more at the moment, other than that I have resigned from the Cabinet. I shall be making a statement later."

He then walked down Downing Street across Whitehall and into his ministerial office. Five hours later, in the same building, he told the press conference: "There was no way, with honour, in which I could remain within the Cabinet."

Constituency regret

The news of Mr Heseltine's resignation was received with regret and perplexity by his constituency party at Halesley, where he has a majority of 13,781 in the last election. "It will take a bit of time to reconcile our conflicting feelings of loyalty to our leader and our MP," Mr Cecil White, deputy chairman of the constituency Conservative Party, said.

"There won't be many who fully comprehend the scope of what he's been fighting for."

NUT to join talks at Acas

By Lucy Hodges

The National Union of Teachers agreed yesterday to take part in next Tuesday's talks at the conciliation service, Acas, aimed at finding a solution to the teachers' pay dispute. But it is refusing to sit with the other teachers' unions and will be in a room on its own.

There has been some doubt about whether the NUT would take part because of its disagreement with the new majority on the teachers' panel over the basic for going to Acas. But the biggest teachers' union is understood to be under considerable pressure from the TUC and other union leaders to participate.

Rail warning on Post deal

The National Union of Railwaymen and the train drivers' union Aslef, have sent a letter to Mr Norman Willis, TUC general secretary, expressing "grave concern" that in the event of industrial action, News International would switch the distribution of *The Times*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Sun* and *News of the World* from British Rail to TMT, a road haulage company with which the newspaper group has corporate links.

Mother killed her son aged eight while on probation for infanticide

From Peter Davenport
Chester

A mother who killed her son aged eight while on probation for the infanticide of his two brothers was yesterday ordered to be detained indefinitely in a special hospital.

Sandra Riley, aged 33, denied the murder of her son, Andrew, but admitted manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility. She also admitted deliberately setting fire to the family home while her son was playing inside, a year before his death.

Chester Crown Court was told that the boy's last words as his mother drowned him in the bath were: "Don't kill me, mum."

The court was told that four medical reports agreed that Riley, of Brocklehurst Avenue, Macclesfield, Cheshire, was suffering from a psychopathic disorder which made her a danger to herself and others. But when she appeared before the same court in October 1983 charged with the infanticide of her two sons, she was released on probation after medical reports said she had been suffering from post-natal depression at the time, and she was no danger to her remaining son, Andrew. A condition of probation was that she should receive psychiatric treatment.

Yesterday the judge, Mr Justice Tudor Price, told her: "While there may be obvious public and private concern in his sad case that you should have had the opportunity to kill Andrew, the function of this court on this occasion is confined to disposing of the offences of manslaughter and arson."

"I am satisfied that the evidence and information be-

1973: A daughter, Andrea born adopted at age of five months. 1974: After meeting Mr Bryan Riley, a warehouseman, their first son, Anthony, was born. He died within a few weeks, described as a "cot death" victim. March, 1976: The couple married. December 1976: Andrew born. Within weeks he sustained a skull fracture and head bruises. "Safety" order taken out. Case conference accepted parents' explanation of accidental injuries. The boy put on "at risk" register. July, 1979: Removed from "at risk" register. January 10, 1981: Christopher born. February 23, 1981: Christopher dies. Open verdict at inquest with ruling of "cot death". March 27, 1983: Fourth son, Philip, born. May 12, 1983: Philip found dead. Mrs Riley charged with infanticide of Philip and Christopher. October, 1983: Pleading guilty to charges at Chester. Placed on probation for two years. Andrew returned to "at risk" register. December 4, 1984: Decision to remove Andrew from "at risk" register. April 11, 1985: Andrew dies.

fore this court is that this tragedy occurred because of your mental illness." The judge ordered that Riley should be detained, without time limit, at the Moss Side Special Hospital in Liverpool, under section 37 of the Mental Health Act.

Earlier, the court had been told by Mr Gareth Williams, QC, for the prosecution, of a

chronology of events in the life of Riley which resulted in the deaths of all her four sons, three by her own hands with the other attributed to a cot death.

Andrew was drowned in a bath on the night of April 11, 1985, four months after he was taken off the at-risk register of the Cheshire social services department, and just a year after he had been rescued from the fire that authorities at the time had accepted as accidental.

The court was told that after she had killed her son, Riley had pretended to neighbours that he had taken an overdose of tablets, but police who were called to the house found scratches and bruising on the boy and traces in his finger nails that showed he had been fighting for his life as he was drowned.

In a statement read to the court, Riley said that after her husband, Brian, had gone out for the night, she had run a bath for herself and her son.

"I washed him, and shampooed his hair. He was in the bath facing me. I grabbed hold of him, pulled him towards me, and then pushed him under the water. He shouted 'Don't kill me, mum'."

"He struggled and almost climbed out twice, but I got him back in. I held him under the water and it may have been then that he hit his head on the taps. After that, he went still. I let go of him and he floated face down in the water."

Mr Rhye Davies, QC, for the defence, said: "So far as the tragic incident relating to the death of her child is concerned, Mrs Riley has no explanation as to how it happened, or why. She can only say that up to the time she was bathing him, everything was all right."

Throughout the 20-minute hearing, Riley sat in the dock next to a woman prison officer. She showed no emotion as she was sentenced.

After the case, the director of Cheshire's social services department, Mr David Wakefield, defended the actions of his social workers and the probation service. He said that with hindsight the psychiatric reports of the earlier case may have under-estimated Riley's condition, but the decision of the court to release her back to the family home effectively tied the hands of his department.



Sandra Riley and her son Andrew whom she killed

'Nothing could have been done' care chief says

Mr David Wakefield, director of social services for Cheshire, said he was satisfied that "there was nothing which could have been done which wasn't done, which might have led to a situation where Andrew was alive today."

He said that after the death he and his colleagues undertook an immediate internal investigation, carried out by a solicitor from the county secretary's department and an assistant director of social services.

"There was no evidence that he staff had acted outside

Since the court case in October 1983:

• Social workers saw Andrew more than 50 times;

• His mother was seen 75 times in 76 weeks;

• Probation officers, whose main concern was with Mrs Riley, saw her 36 times;

• He also saw Andrew on five occasions.

• School used to check for signs of injury.

Departmental policies. They had discharged their responsibilities in behalf of the other agencies in a satisfactory way," he said.

A second, independent review, ordered because of public concern, concluded that the Riley family was offered every possible service and he could see no grounds to recommend a further inquiry.

The social worker on the case, Mrs Linda Simpson, aged 7, was one of the most qualified and experienced in the department with 17 years of experience. The probation officer, Mr Wakefield's department as 378 children on its at risk register.

Mr Wakefield has called for a comprehensive review of the law which balances the rights of children against the rights of adults. "The balance has been strongly with the adults recently," he said.

"We need some kind of opportunity within the court structure to consider evidence and professional judgements in a non-adversarial way and in a non-adversarial place, something akin to the Scottish family courts."

However he said that "the difficulty in this case was that all the evidence was that Andrew wasn't at risk". That was a judgement shared by all the professionals involved in the case. There was certainly nothing on the basis of which we could have taken care proceedings, especially in a case where the court had made a judgement placing his mother on probation backed by psychiatric and medical evidence."

An inter-departmental committee of officials from the Home Office and the Lord Chancellor's Department is expected to report by Easter on the possible forms that a family court in England and Wales might take. (Our Legal Affairs Correspondent writes.)

Pressure for a family court has mounted in the past few months after cases such as the death of Jasmine Beckford and a Family Court Campaign backed by more than 100 national bodies, MPs and academics was launched in November to press the Government for a commitment.

At present family law issues such as child custody and child protection are dealt with by different courts with resulting delay and confusion.

Warning on boy's life is denied

Andrew's grandmother, Mrs Lillian Riley, aged 60, claims she told Mrs Linda Simpson, a social worker she feared for the boy's life, a claim denied by Cheshire Social Services department.

"When she was first released from the remand centre I went to the social services office three or four times. I told the social worker that Andrew wasn't safe and that she would kill him eventually."

"Mrs Simpson said she couldn't see it. But she knew he wasn't safe. She told me that if anything happened to Bryan (Andrew's father) the boy would be taken off Sandra the same day."

After the hearing, Mrs Riley, said: "Now it is up to the experts to decide when she can be freed. They made a mistake last time and set her free to kill poor Andrew. She should have been detained for at least 20 years."

The boy's father, Mr Brian Riley, who now lives with a woman and her two young children in Macclesfield said that he never believed Andrew was at risk. But he added: "She is either very sick or very evil."

She was on remand for six months under constant observation. They should have picked up what was wrong with her instead of diagnosing post-natal depression.

"Looking back, the probation officer couldn't have done any more."

"She wouldn't go to the psychiatrists on her own and Mrs Simpson would pick her up in the car and take her. I can't blame Mrs Simpson for what happened."



Police armed with sub-machine guns to counter any possible terrorist activity at Heathrow (Photograph: Bill Warhurst).

Three die in fire at rest home

Detectives and forensic experts were yesterday sifting through the debris of a rest home in Exeter, Devon, after an early morning fire that killed three elderly women (Tim Jones writes).

The dead women are Mrs Mavis Joy, aged 59, Mr Elizabeth Tron, aged 77, and Mrs Margaret Madge, aged 62. They were among 31 residents rescued from the burning building, but died on their way to hospital.

Nine other elderly residents, three members of staff and Mr Terence Barrell, a fire officer, were detained in hospital suffering burns and the effects of smoke.

A police spokesman said: "Arson cannot be ruled out."

Machine-gun patrols protect Heathrow

By Rupert Morris

Uniformed police carrying sub-machine-guns appeared for the first time in public in Britain yesterday patrolling terminal three departure lounge at Heathrow Airport alongside Mr Michael Spicer, Minister for Aviation.

Mr Spicer said: "We hope this will not be a permanent feature of the British landscape, but both Government and police are determined that we shall respond in kind to the new tactics being adopted by terrorists."

Intensified security at Heathrow, where for the past eight days armed soldiers as well as police have been mingling with passengers in terminal three, came after terrorist attacks on Israeli

check-in desks at Vienna and Rome airports two weeks ago.

Yesterday members of Scotland Yard's D11 firearm specialists' unit were on guard both in the departure lounge, and for certain flights, on the runway tarmac. They carried Heckler and Koch MP5A2 sub-machine-guns.

Airport police commander Patrick Carson said the guns were set for single-shot firing, and his men would not be "spraying bullets around". He conceded, however, that there was a danger that passengers could be caught in crossfire.

Machine pistols are to be carried by police at Ringway airport, Manchester, from Monday.

Father may testify at child inquiry

Andrew Neil, who is serving a life sentence for murdering his daughter Tyra Henry, aged 20 months, is to be asked if he wishes to submit evidence to any inquiry into the handling of the case by social workers and other agencies. It was announced yesterday.

A preliminary hearing for the inquiry, chaired by Mr Stephen Sedley, QC, opened yesterday at Lambeth town hall to decide who would be offering evidence. The inquiry itself is expected to begin on February 10.

Lambeth ratepayers and the local health authority may face a bill of more than £25,000 for Mr Sedley's services. He was appointed at a flat fee of £7,500, with £750 a day.

Sprays can halt spread of cold virus

By Pearce Wright
Science Editor

The days of the common cold are numbered. After 50 years of resistance to the efforts of medical research to stop the runny nose, a way has been found of halting the spread of the most prevalent cold virus.

The advance comes after experiments by several international medical teams, including the Common Cold Research Unit at Salisbury in Wiltshire, with natural antiviral agents such as interferon and interferin, which can be produced by genetic engineering.

The first attempts to perfect a cure also produced side-effects resembling influenza, so research turned to prevention.

The latest results of trials by separate groups in Australia and the United States, using a nasal spray with the same active ingredient, alpha-interferon, show a high success rate in preventing the transmission from infected to healthy members of families and other contacts.

The details of the treatments tried by a team working with Dr Robert Douglas at the University of Adelaide and with Dr Frederick Hayden of the University of Virginia School of Medicine, are described in the current issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

The results from the two studies are almost identical, providing confidence in the findings. They both show that when the cold was caused by rhinovirus, the most common agent of infection, the nasal spray was almost 80 per cent effective. About half of common colds come into this category.

There are, however, more than 200 distinct strains that produce sniffles, against which the nasal spray was less effective, preventing spreading in only 39 per cent of cases in the respective Australian and American studies.

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BBC suggests fee for videos

By David Hewson, Arts Correspondent

The BBC suggested yesterday that extra television licences for people with more than one set and with video recorder could solve its cash problems and at the same time published evidence that most of the public favour advertising rather than a licence fee as a way of raising the corporation.

The BBC's second submission to the Peacock committee, which is examining its funding, reaffirmed the corporation's commitment to the licence fee and says it is the sum of finance available to public service broadcasting.

But the evidence suggests that, ways of spreading the cost of television more evenly throughout society must be found, then extra licences for video users and people with more than one set could account for between 100 million and £200 million of the corporation's required £1,000 million income.

The measures put forward for consideration by the BBC

include separate £10 annual licences for car radios and video recorders, or a £60 one-off tax on all vehicles registered with a radio.

It also suggests a composite fee for all households with more than set and video 25 per cent more than the present licence, which would bring the cost of watching colour in such households today to £72.50.

The most worrying piece of

research for the corporation in its submission came in the results of a public opinion poll commissioned by the BBC on public's opinion of the licence fee.

The survey, based on hour-long interviews carried out by the British Market Research Bureau, concluded that about two-thirds of the public favoured funding BBC television by advertising

ITV holiday ratings blow

The BBC yesterday claimed victory in the Christmas television ratings battle, winning 54.4 per cent of the total audience in the week ending December 29 and beating independent television's night special, *Master on the Orient Express* (12.5 million viewers), with its own *Only Fools and Horses* (16.9 million).

The annual holiday tangle gave the corporation nine out of

the top 10 ratings, its best showing in recent years and one attributed to the scheduling skills of Michael Grade, controller of BBC 1.

The only independent television programme to reach the top 10 was *Coronation Street*. The first two positions were taken by the omnibus editions of *EastEnders*, (23 million viewers each).

GP trainees criticized for poor knowledge on disease and drugs

By Nicholas Timmins, Social Services Correspondent

Stinging criticism of the standards achieved by doctors training to become general practitioners, and of some of the doctors who train them, has come from the chief examiner of the Royal College of General Practitioners.

In a report to the regional advisors who oversee GPs' training, Dr Andrew Belton says that most candidates seem unable to construct a logical argument, orally or in writing. Most were unable to demonstrate any critical appreciation of drug trials; basic statistics appeared to be a language from another world; and most did not appear to read medical journals.

A surprisingly high number of candidates had a poor knowledge of how to manage chronic diseases such as hypertension or obstructive lung disease and there was a lack of rational prescribing of drugs in managing such conditions, the report adds.

It says that in spite of a campaign by the college to improve general practice, encouraging GPs to "audit" their performance by comparing it with other doctors, most candidates in the oral examination appeared to have neither the inclination nor the opportunity to demonstrate any evidence of quality control in day-to-day practice. The use of the term "audit" produced an air of

cynical disbelief, the report says.

The college's examination is usually taken by doctors who have qualified and are at the end of the three years' specialist training that doctors have to undergo before they can become general practitioners in their own right.

The examination is not compulsory, but most trainee GPs take it, as do some GPs who became family doctors before specialist training was compulsory.

Dr Belton said concern had to be expressed about the 50 or so candidates who scored below 25 per cent on the multiple choice paper. That reflected an ignorance that could inspire only lack of confidence in colleagues and patients.

One candidate, a principal in general practice, scored less than 5 per cent.

The report criticizes some family doctors who teach trainees in their own practices. Dr Belton says there was deep anxiety about the standard of training received by candidates in some practices, and that the number appeared to be increasing.

Those candidates appeared to have a workload higher than that of any of the established family doctors in the practice who were meant to be training them. They appeared to receive no teaching, and to be allowed

no opportunity for self-education, nor encouragement to appraise critically the delivery of health care in the practice or the community.

Those candidates receive "a very raw deal" in their training, the report says. Trainees should spend the year's experience in general practice, which is part of the three-year course, in different practices to avoid such a situation, it adds.

Dr Belton says that the examining panel felt candidates' inability to write plainly or argue logically must represent inability to communicate with anybody else.

Dr Bill Styles, secretary of the college, said that the report was designed to help advisers and course organizers to improve training. "It is not a great disaster but a way of informing people of some of the problems," he said.

The pass rate for the college's examination is about 74 per cent for those undergoing the vocational training, and about 68 per cent for other candidates. The college is to send a report to the Committee for Postgraduate Training in General Practice.

Dr Styles said that vocational training in the past 10 years had raised the standards of general practice by improving the quality of entrants and improving the practices which do the training.



Miss Carol Vaughan, of the Stratford-upon-Avon Butterfly Farm, with a Giant Owl Butterfly, in what is said to be the world's smallest tropical rain forest. The 6ft by 6ft by 8ft glass box, reproduces exactly the heat, humidity and conditions of a South-east Asian jungle, and is being shown at the Travel Trade Fair which began yesterday at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham (Photograph: Peter Trievnor).

Prince asks architects to study inner cities

By Charles Kneivitt, Architecture Correspondent

The Prince of Wales has asked the Royal Institute of British Architects to prepare a study of what can be done to revive Britain's decaying inner cities. The inquiry is likely to take six months.

Mr Fred Lloyd Roche, honorary treasurer of the institute and former general manager of Milton Keynes Development Corporation, will head the study team.

He is likely to appoint members of the institute's community architecture group, set up 10 years ago. Mr Rod Hackney, the architect from Macclesfield who is already preparing a report for the Prince on last year's riots in the Handsworth area of Birmingham, is another probable choice.

A report in today's issue of the trade weekly *Building Design* suggests that the royal request will mend any rift that might have remained after the Prince's controversial speech to architects at Hampton Court Palace in 1984.

Campaign is launched to assist the mentally ill

Ten mental health organizations have joined forces to launch a new Schizophrenia Alliance with a manifesto demanding that central government, health authorities and local councils commit more resources to the caring for the mentally ill.

"The policy of closing large mental hospitals is failing because of a lack of community care facilities," the new alliance said yesterday.

"Patients suffering from schizophrenia are being discharged without adequate accommodation and support and families of sufferers are finding difficulty in getting a hospital place for their relative."

"A comprehensive range of services for people suffering from chronic mental illness must be created before hospitals are closed, and many saved by closures must be directed to enhancing and developing such services, the alliance adds.

National Gallery director to go

One of the most coveted jobs in the artistic world, the directorship of the National Gallery, London, became open to applicants yesterday with the resignation of Sir Michael Levey, who has held the post since 1973.

Sir Michael will retire next January, six months before his sixtieth birthday. He has been expected to leave the gallery for some time to concentrate on writing.

The task of finding a replacement is likely to take the gallery trustees some months.

Tributes to Gee and Lynott

Showbusiness personalities, including Les Dennis, Dana, The Kinks and Coronation Street's Elizabeth Dawn and Thelma Barlow, were among mourners at the funeral yesterday in Fulford, Yorkshire, for Dustin Gee, the television comedian, who died in his dressing room last Friday.

At Richmond, south-west London, family and friends of Phil Lynott, the rock singer, paid tribute to him at a Requiem Mass.

Firechief inquiry

The Home Office is to carry out an inquiry into the dismissal of Derbyshire's former chief fire officer, Mr Trevor Slevin, who lost his job last September over disciplinary charges connected with drink driving and unauthorized expenditure on fire service equipment.

£1,000 houses

DIY enthusiasts are flocking to buy 38 vandalized terraced houses at Siddick, near Wokingham, West Cambridgeshire, which Alfordale council is offering for sale at £1,000 each to prevent the former mining village from being demolished.

Kirsty 'stable'

Kirsty MacDonald, the baby who had heart defects corrected by a miniature balloon when only two-days old, was described yesterday as "still very poorly," but reasonably "stable" at Killingbeck Hospital, Leeds.

NUM calls in TUC against electricians

From David Felton, Labour Correspondent in Sheffield

The National Union of Mineworkers yesterday called on the TUC to launch disciplinary action against the electricians' union for establishing links with the breakaway miners' union.

An executive meeting in Sheffield decided to call for action under the TUC's disciplinary rule 13, which could, if TUC leaders find the case proven, lead to the expulsion from the congress of the Electrical Electronic Telecommunications and Plumbing Union.

The EETPU will today entertain leaders of the Union of Democratic Mineworkers at its Kent education centre for a conference on energy policy. UDM officials are hoping that the meeting could be the forerunner to the establishment of a formal link with the electricians.

With the move by the NUM against the electricians' union a second front of attack was opened against the EETPU which is already facing the possibility of disciplinary action by the TUC if the union makes a deal with Mr Rupert Murdoch on a no-strike agreement for the proposed London Post.

Mr Arthur Scargill, NUM president, said after the execu-

tive meeting: "The very fact that the EETPU are inviting people who were previously in membership of this union and are now not recognized by the TUC is one of the issues which will form the basis of our complaints to the TUC."

Rule 13 says that TUC affiliates should not indulge in any action which is detrimental to the interests of the trade union movement. Mr Scargill said yesterday that today's conference organized by the EETPU was "contrary to the interests of other unions."

Mr Norman Willis, the TUC general secretary, has already warned Mr Eric Hammond, leader of the electricians, that his liaison with the UDM is causing grave concern (Barrie Clement writes).

In telephone conversations this week Mr Willis told Mr Hammond that the EETPU should not be encouraging "breakaway" organizations and that the electricians were hindering the healing process necessary after the miners' strike.

Mr Hammond, as chairman of the TUC's energy committee, had obligations to look after unions already affiliated to the official labour movement, Mr Willis said.

Closure of private hospital

Competition from United States and Arab-owned private hospitals has contributed to the closure of the private 68-bed Nightingale Bupa Hospital in London, which is run by the non-profit making Nuffield Hospitals group (Nicholas Timmins writes).

The hospital, in Lisson Grove, St Marylebone, is to close from April 30 in spite of a refurbishment of the building at a cost of more than £2.5 million by Bupa and Nuffield Hospitals only eight years ago.

Nuffield Hospitals, with 32 hospitals containing about 1300 acute beds, will remain the largest private provider of surgical beds, ahead of American Medical International which has 1259 acute beds in 13 hospitals. Mr Oliver Rowell, Nuffield Hospitals' general manager, said yesterday that the closure reflected "the continued investment by the commercial for-profit hospital operators coupled with the growing number of private patients preferring to undergo routine treatment away from the centre of London."

The Nightingale, he continued, had provided costly to maintain and develop, and its location deterred patients and consultants.

Social Trends: Leisure, wealth and health

Workers get more time for leisure

By Robin Young

A steady fall in average working hours, down to 38.2 hours for male full-time employees by 1984, and increasing holiday entitlements (95 per cent of full-time manual employees now get four weeks or more), have given people more time to spend about the home and at leisure, according to Government statistics published in *Social Trends*.

Women still do most of the day-to-day running of the home, although married men and women believe men should do more.

Government statisticians have also detected a marked tendency for married men to overstate the extent to which they share the housework. Fourteen per cent of married men claim to share equal responsibility for general domestic duties, but only 7 per cent of married women accept that they do.

In spite of such domestic disagreements and the strains of modern life, marriage is holding up better than might be expected. Just under four fifths of people living in private households in 1983 still lived in married couple families, a proportion which has fallen only slightly since 1961.

The number of marriages in 1984 - 396,000 - was 9,000 more than at the low point in 1982.

The number of divorces in England and Wales, by contrast, has declined slowly since reaching a peak in 1980. In all, 158,000 divorces were made absolute in 1984, double the number in 1971 when the Divorce Reform Act came into force. A fresh rush of petitions

began in October 1984 when a change in the law permitted people to petition for divorce after only one year of marriage.

There has been a sharp decline in the number of teenage marriages. In 1984, one in six spinsters marrying was a teenager, whereas a decade earlier it would have been more than one in three. That may have implications for the future divorce rate because spouses who marry in their teens are almost twice as likely to divorce as those who marry between the ages of 20 and 24.

Even among those who do not marry there are indications that relationships might be becoming more stable. As in 1976, there are still 39 per cent of adult residents who never take a holiday, but a growing number take more than one.

In the AB socio-economic group the number who took no holidays (22 per cent) slightly exceeded the number who took three or more (18 per cent). The total number of holidays taken by British residents rose by two million to fifty million in 1984.

At this time of year men are spending 26½ hours a week watching television, and women 31½.

That accounts for all but an hour of the average wife's free time, so it is not so surprising that less time than for many years is spent listening to the radio (8 hours 44 minutes a week on average), or that 28 per cent of the population will not have had time to glance at this or any other newspaper.

Tomorrow: Health and education

Britain more prosperous and less inequitable

By David Smith, Economics Correspondent

Britain has become more prosperous and equitable during the past 10 years, according to *Social Trends*. Real income has risen, in spite of falling in two recessions since 1974, to 16.5 per cent above its 1974 level in 1984.

Between 1980 and 1984, real household disposable income a head rose by 6 per cent, as wages and salaries kept ahead of inflation.

Social Trends records that marketable wealth for individuals totalled £745 billion in 1983, the latest year for which figures are available.

On that definition alone, the wealthiest 1 per cent of the population owned 20 per cent of all wealth in 1983, down from 31 per cent in 1971. The richest 5 per cent owned 40 per cent of

wealth, down from 52 per cent in 1971.

The wealth distribution, on this definition, has not perceptibly changed since the 1970s. In 1971 the bottom 50 per cent of the population owned 97 per cent of marketable wealth. By 1983, that share had edged down to 96 per cent.

WEALTH				
	1971	1976	1982	1983
Marketable wealth owned by:				
Wealthiest 1%	21	24	20	20
5%	25	28	22	22
10%	27	30	23	23
50%	97	96	96	96
Total wealth	£140bn	£282bn	£602bn	£745bn

Source: *Social Trends*

Male life expectancy up 12 years in half century

Life expectancy for men has increased by 12 years in the past half-century, and by 14 years for women. A new-born boy can therefore expect to live to the age of 70 and a girl to 76, according to *Social Trends*.

But the increase in longevity has led to a big increase in the number of one-person pensioner households and these are expected to increase by a further one million to 3.7 million by the year 2001. The increase has important implications for public expenditure, the report says.

The report shows dramatic reductions during the past 30 years in infectious diseases with diphtheria and polio now almost eradicated, but with whooping cough becoming more common in the late 1970s and early 1980s after scares over the safety of the vaccine. Only

Life expectancy (UK)

	Male	Female	Male	Female
	1981	1981	1981	1981
From birth	68.4	69.4	68.8	70.2
From age				
1 year	62.1	63.1	63.1	64.1
5 years	58.8	59.8	59.8	60.8
10 years	57.1	58.1	58.1	59.1
15 years	56.7	57.7	57.7	58.7
20 years	56.7	57.7	57.7	58.7
25 years	56.7	57.7	57.7	58.7
30 years	56.7	57.7	57.7	58.7
35 years	56.7	57.7	57.7	58.7
40 years	56.7	57.7	57.7	58.7
45 years	56.7	57.7	57.7	58.7
50 years	56.7	57.7	57.7	58.7
55 years	56.7	57.7	57.7	58.7
60 years	56.7	57.7	57.7	58.7
65 years	56.7	57.7	57.7	58.7
70 years	56.7	57.7	57.7	58.7
75 years	56.7	57.7	57.7	58.7
80 years	56.7	57.7	57.7	58.7

Source: Government Actuary's Department

Young adults' volunteer scheme sought by SDP

By Howard Underwood

A national community volunteer scheme to bring about a big expansion of social services, health, education and environmental protection provision was launched yesterday by the Social Democratic Party.

In the latest of a number of policy discussion papers the party says that a scheme to develop the wide-scale community involvement of Britain's young adults is vital to national renewal.

It singles out for confrontation two specific crises: disillusionment, particularly among the young, and an acute lack of care for the sick, elderly and increasing numbers of one-parent families.

The Government should set

up an enterprising national community volunteer service agency and appoint individuals to its board. These would broadly represent the interests of volunteer groups, trade union, professionals, young people and statutory service, but would not be appointed by or accountable to those interests.

The agency would be responsible to a government minister who would be accountable to Parliament. It should be given guidelines to work by and a budget which would allow it to run a core of schemes itself and to fund other organizations to run schemes.

Leading article, page 11

Tories win Lambeth injunction

Conservative members of the Labour-led Lambeth council, south London, yesterday won an injunction ending their exclusion from council committee meetings (Hugh Clayton writes). But the declaration of interests that led to the Lambeth dispute is likely to be adopted next week by 12 other Labour-led councils and the Inner London Education Authority.

The injunction granted yesterday in a private hearing by Mr Justice Ewbank means that Conservatives in Lambeth can no longer be kept off committees because they will not complete the new forms.

Servicemen were held in 'conditions of oppression'

By Gregory Neale

The eight servicemen acquitted of espionage offences in last year's Cyprus secrets trial were held and questioned in conditions of oppression, the inquiry into their interrogation was told.

Mr Igor Judge, QC, counsel with the inquiry, said that the conditions under which the men were held, detained and questioned, in lengthy and solitary confinement, without legal advice, had in part been due to the military authorities' concern quickly to detect and prevent any threat to national security.

But such arguments of necessity were wrong, Mr Judge said, and he wondered why it had not occurred to the

interrogators that "confessions" given under such circumstances could be unreliable.

The eight servicemen were acquitted of espionage charges at the Central Criminal Court last October, after Britain's longest and most costly Official Secrets trial. They told the jury they had made false confessions under the pressure of interrogation.

The conditions the servicemen experienced did constitute oppression, Mr Judge contended, but he emphasized that there was no question of the men's interrogators or their guards having subjected them to torture or physical mistreatment.

Sharp rise in racial violence

Increases in racial attacks ranging from more than a quarter to 72 per cent in different parts of east London in the past year have been recorded by monitoring organizations.

In Tower Hamlets, 495 separate assaults were reported to the Community Alliance for

Police Accountability, according to its annual report. Among the more serious incidents were 15 actual or attempted arson attacks.

A 72 per cent increase in racial attacks last year was recorded by Greenwich Action Committee against Racist Attacks.

Air gun attacks on black families were quite common. The Newham Monitoring Project also records airguns being used to shoot at black families and Asian families, and a "couple" of incidents involving airguns are also known in Tower Hamlets.

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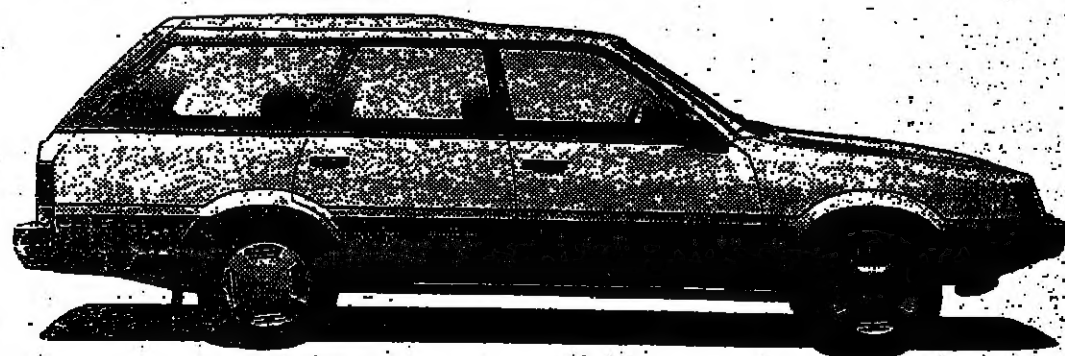
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Commentary

Geoffrey Smith

President Reagan's call for sanctions against Libya illustrates one of the fundamental problems of the Atlantic Alliance; that its cohesion is always most likely to be threatened by transatlantic differences over third countries. Within the Atlantic region itself, there may be disagreements from time to time over tactics, towards the Soviet Union or over particular weapons systems, but not over the basic consideration that the West needs to be united in providing adequate military protection for all members of NATO against Soviet military power. It was, after all, to prevent the expansion of that power across Europe that NATO was established in the first place.

This concept of West European security is challenged by minority sections of opinion in a number of countries. But it has been accepted up to now by every NATO government. There is not, however, always the same identity of attitude or of interest outside the Atlantic region. In the case of Libya, there is not much difference between European and American assessments of the Gaddafi regime. But the British Government, in particular, is sceptical about the effectiveness of economic sanctions.

That is why Britain was so reluctant to impose them against Iran at President Carter's behest in 1980 and against South Africa last year. The doubt relates to the instrument rather than the adversary.

There are also considerations of commercial self-interest. It would be much more damaging for Britain to break its links with South Africa or Italy to do so with Libya than it is for the United States to take its stand against Colonel Gaddafi.

In fact, Mr Reagan has acted with more sensitivity towards the European position than may be readily appreciated on this side of the Atlantic. At his press conference on Tuesday evening he was remarkably understanding.

While making it clear that he would like European support, he recognized that some European countries may have problems of their own in their own economies, that would render it nearly impossible for them to take similar measures. He issued a tough warning only against "other nations moving into Libya to take commercial advantage of our departure".

It was so that point alone that the American Ambassador, Mr Charles Price, pressed Sir Geoffrey Howe at their meeting on Wednesday. There was a ready response. The British Government will not take any steps which would undercut the American measures. No feathers have been ruffled at the Foreign Office by that meeting, in sharp contrast to previous occasions when the United States has been seeking to bludgeon its allies into economic boycotts.

Not in President Reagan's action as draconian as many Americans would have liked. An ABC News poll taken immediately after his press conference showed a majority of 53 per cent favouring military action against Colonel Gaddafi if the United States believed he had aided the terrorist attacks on Americans - and more than 80 per cent believed he had in fact played either a major or a minor role.

So Governments on both sides of the Atlantic are taking deliberate care to avoid another Alliance crisis over this boycott. It is recognized here that Mr Reagan has to take some firm action to satisfy a large and important section of his own public opinion, and he has acknowledged the limitations on European action.

Unfortunately, this statesmanship on the part of governments does not dispose of the problem. There remains the danger that European public opinion may once again believe that Mr Reagan has been impulsive and that many Americans may conclude that the Europeans have been as feeble as ever.

It is, moreover, the kind of danger that is likely to recur more frequently these days because Europe is no longer such a focus of strategic anxiety as it was when NATO was established. It is in parts of the world not covered by the Soviet-American strategic balance, such as Central America, Africa and the Middle East, that incidents are now more liable to occur.

There is no possibility of NATO operating as a worldwide alliance. What is needed, in respect of each side of the Atlantic for the particular concerns of the other. That should be remembered when other episodes arise which provoke sharper conflicts of interest - and emotion than Libya does today.

Polaroid's court victory pushes Kodak out of the picture

From Trevor Fishlock, New York

The nine-year battle of giants over the instant photography business ended with defeat for Kodak and victory for the Polaroid company, which pioneered the process.

Kodak yesterday obeyed a court order and stopped production and marketing of its instant cameras and films. It prepared to write off plant worth tens of millions of dollars. Polaroid was left master of the instant photo field.

The ruling at the end of the protracted patent action left millions of Kodak owners with useless cameras.

Kodak assured dealers that they would receive credits for unsold cameras and film, and that owners would be able to exchange their cameras for company stock or for a disc camera or for Kodak coupons worth \$50 (\$34).

Defeat for Kodak came with a Supreme Court judge's refusal to allow the company's last-minute appeal to stay in the instant picture business. Earlier an appeal judge upheld the ruling of a judge in Boston that Kodak had infringed Polaroid's patents, some of them held by Mr Edwin Land, who invented the Polaroid in 1947 and holds more patents than any American inventor since Thomas Edison.

Polaroid went to law in 1976, saying Kodak had copied the advanced Polaroid SX-70 automatic camera.

The court victory is significant for Polaroid: about nine-tenths of its business is tied to instant photography. Its sales totalled \$1.5 billion in 1984.

Kodak had about a quarter of the American instant picture market, a market that has declined since 1978 with the development of simpler and more efficient 35mm cameras and processing.

Defeat is by no means crippling for Kodak. It is a much larger company and the instant picture market represented only a small proportion of its \$10.6 billion sales in 1984.

But Kodak is concerned about the outcome of another legal battle: Polaroid's claim for damages. Polaroid said yesterday that "every camera Kodak sold injured us". And Kodak made more than \$6 million of them. Polaroid is likely to seek damages of more than \$1 billion.

With the news of the court decision, Kodak stock fell on the New York exchange by \$1.37 to \$48.63. Polaroid stock was up \$1.25, to \$44.50.

It is not clear what effect the court decision will have on the Japanese Fuji company, which makes an instant camera.

Exchange offer: Owners of Kodak's instant cameras in Britain have been promised a generous exchange terms (Sheila Beardsall writes).

Japan tries to head off Congress fury

From Our Own Correspondent, Tokyo

The Japanese Foreign Minister is in the United States attempting to head off a new deluge of criticism when the US trade figures for last year are announced shortly. Japan's share of the American trade deficit is expected to be about \$50 billion (\$25 billion).

Mr Shimura Abe is specifically hoping that his visit can conclude negotiations on the opening of the Japanese market in four key sectors to head off another round of congressional fury.

Negotiations began a year ago on the four areas, telecommunications, electronics, pharmaceuticals and forestry products. Significant progress seems to have been made in all areas except forestry, where there is still disagreement on tariff cuts on imported plywood.

Mr Abe will be trying hard to convince Mr George Shultz, the US Secretary of State, that

Japan, as a free-trader, is doing all it can to help President Reagan defeat the more serious of the 300 protectionist Bills pending in Congress. He can point to new investment in the US, including a new Toyota manufacturing plant and recent purchases of Boeing airliners by All Nippon Airways.

Mr Abe is also expected to give Japan's response to American requests for co-operation with sanctions against Libya.

He will undoubtedly also emphasize the fact that defence and overseas development aid were the only two areas which got increased funding under the 1986 budget when he sees Mr Casper Weinberger, the Defence Secretary. Defence expenditure went up by 6.58 per cent. The Japanese, however, are not yet in a position to respond to the American request to participate in Strategic Defence Initiative research.

Sanyo head to resign after deaths

From David Watts, Tokyo

The president of one of Japan's leading electrical companies, Sanyo Electric, has offered to resign after four people died in incidents attributed to the company's heaters.

Mr Kaoru Iue will offer his resignation at a general stockholders' meeting next month. Fellow directors of the affiliated Tokyo Sanyo Electric Co have also offered their resignations partly in response to the Japanese tradition of senior management and government officials taking responsibility for the errors of their subordinates, but also out of sympathy for the man who had built Sanyo's sales up to the 1,000 billion yen mark by the end of last year.

Mr Iue told a local newspaper: "I was told about the possibility of insufficient burning by the heaters in May and June last year. I deeply regret the lack of necessary action to cope with the problem at that time. I will take all responsibility."

Spain profits from trade with Rock

From Dominique Searle, Gibraltar

Spain has made a greater profit out of the opening of the Gibraltar frontier than the colony itself, according to a report by the Gibraltar Government's economic adviser just made public.

The report, copies of which were made available to the Spanish Foreign Ministry, says that exports from Spain to Gibraltar doubled in the first quarter of 1985 to £5 million. It adds that while Gibraltar's expenditure is currently some £15 million a year this can be expected to rise to at least £20 million to £30 million. Most of this money is being spent on food, household goods and construction materials.

The "significant boom" in tourism means that £20 million has been spent by some two million visitors to the Rock since normalization of relations. The average annual figure for visitors in the previous 10 years was 150,000.

Plea for \$5bn drive to tackle acid rain

From Michael Binyon, Bonn

President Reagan and Mr Brian Mulroney, the Canadian Prime Minister, have been given reports by their special negotiators calling on the US Government and industry to spend \$5,000 million (£3,400 million) in the next five years to develop ways of controlling acid rain.

Mr Drew Lewis, a former US Transport Secretary empowered to deal with the most vexed issue between the two countries, said that acid rain, produced by US industry and falling in Canada, was an increasingly serious problem in both countries.

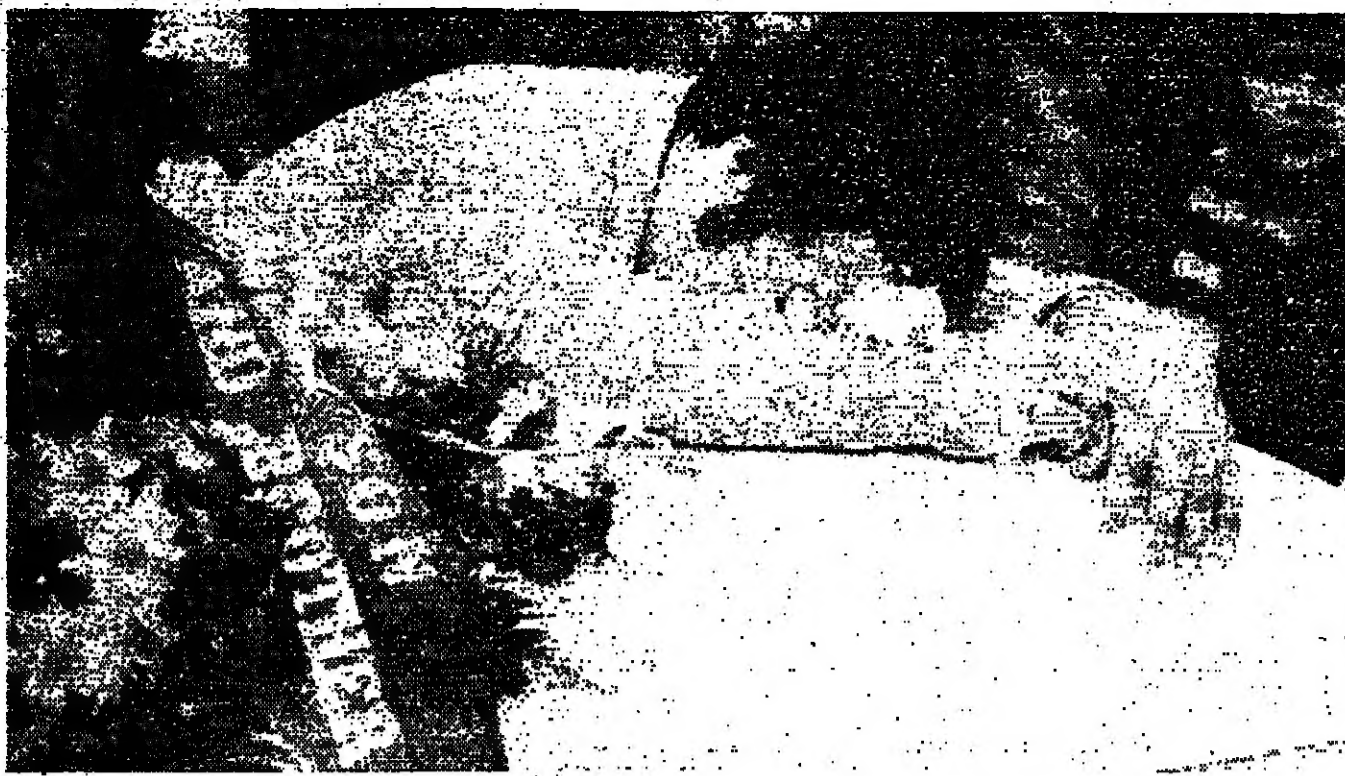
The report said there were still too many scientific uncertainties to eliminate pollution from specific sources. But it went beyond the Administration's earlier call for more research by urging the immediate development of technology to reduce sulphur emission.

Canada has been calling for specific reductions in these

emissions, mainly from coal-fired power plants in the Middle West, and may still seek them later. But Ottawa, whose representative was Mr William Davis, a former Premier of Ontario, is expected to welcome the report.

Some of the proposed \$5,000 million, split evenly between US Government and industry, would be spent on a commercial project to demonstrate cleaner methods of burning coal. The report does not say how industry's share would be raised.

At a time of proposed cuts in US Government spending, the recommendation puts Mr Reagan in a difficult position. He is unwilling to spend the money, but cannot ignore the report, commissioned at the last US-Canadian summit in March, because of the depths of Canadian feeling and the political tension surrounding acid rain. He is likely to give only a low-key response.



John Sanchez weeping over the coffin of his half-brother Felipe Garza, aged 15, in California. Felipe, who died last week, had asked his parents for his heart to be given to his girlfriend Donna Ashlock, aged 14. She underwent a transplant operation.

All eyes on Botha to stop economic rot

From Michael Hornsby, Johannesburg

Dr Fritz Leutwiler, the Swiss banker acting as mediator in Pretoria's efforts to reschedule part of its foreign debts, arrives in South Africa today for talks with financial and political leaders.

His visit will begin a testing period for South Africa's once-invincible economy.

All eyes will be on President Botha when he makes the keynote policy statement at the opening of Parliament in Cape Town at the end of this month. It is widely seen as a last chance to convince the world community that Pretoria is genuinely committed to the abolition of apartheid and the sort of reforms that could defuse domestic unrest.

It was Mr Botha's disastrously anti-climatic speech to a National Party congress in Durban on August 15, which had been billed as an important

statement of reform but in the event contained little of substance, that sent the rand into a nosedive, and prompted American bankers to call in some of their short-term loans.

The behaviour of international bankers may be hypocritical but their change of attitude is a reality, and one of the most effective forms of international pressure Pretoria has faced.

The South African currency has started to show some signs of recovery only in the past few weeks. Between June and the end of November the rand's value declined by 50 per cent against sterling.

This fall has sharply boosted inflation, which is now running at nearly 17 per cent and could go as high as 20 per cent.

A bizarre side-effect has been a speculative boom on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. Financial analysts say people are investing in shares, however uncertain they may be, as a store of value, in an attempt to

protect themselves against still higher rates of inflation and further falls in the value of the rand. *Business Day*, the country's main financial paper, has described the boom as "a collective act of desperation".

Pretoria responded at the end of August by suspending for four months repayments of principal (interest payments continued) on some \$14,000 million (£9,525 million) of its estimated \$24,000 million of foreign debt.

Last month, when it became clear that agreement on rescheduling these debts was still not in sight, Pretoria unilaterally extended the repayment "standstill" until March 31.

In addition, through Dr Leutwiler, Pretoria has circulated to about 30 leading creditor banks proposals which, it is understood, would postpone repayments of capital until 1990, with interest rates on these loans continuing at the present levels.

Not surprisingly, the South African proposals, seen as the first shot in prolonged and hard-fought negotiations, have infuriated the banking community. Apart from anything else, Pretoria would effectively be turning short-term loans into medium-term ones, which would normally carry a higher rate of interest.

After an estimated drop of 0.5 per cent in 1985, gross domestic product is forecast to grow by three per cent this year.

But with the black population (which accounts for more than 70 per cent of the total population of some 32 million) increasing by at least 2.8 per cent a year, it is estimated that economic growth of five per cent is needed to begin reducing a black unemployment rate of about 25 per cent. Foreign capital investment, now virtually non-existent, is considered vital to achieve this.

Swiss mediator, page 19

Hong Kong cheered by appeal for stateless

From David Bonavia, Hong Kong

Top Hong Kong legislators were jubilant yesterday after their unanimous decision to press Britain to grant access to the UK for people here who fear they will become stateless after reversion of the territory to Chinese sovereignty in 1997.

Miss Lydia Dunn, the senior unofficial member of the Legislative Council, was widely congratulated on a tough speech she made on behalf of some 6,000 ethnic Indians and other people, including some who fought the Japanese here in 1941.

However, unofficial members of the council have put off plans to visit Britain and lobby there before the Commons debate on nationality.

Miss Dunn said after this week's Legislative Council debate: "We consider that these modest requests are the very least the people of Hong Kong can expect to see satisfied after nearly a century and a half of British rule."

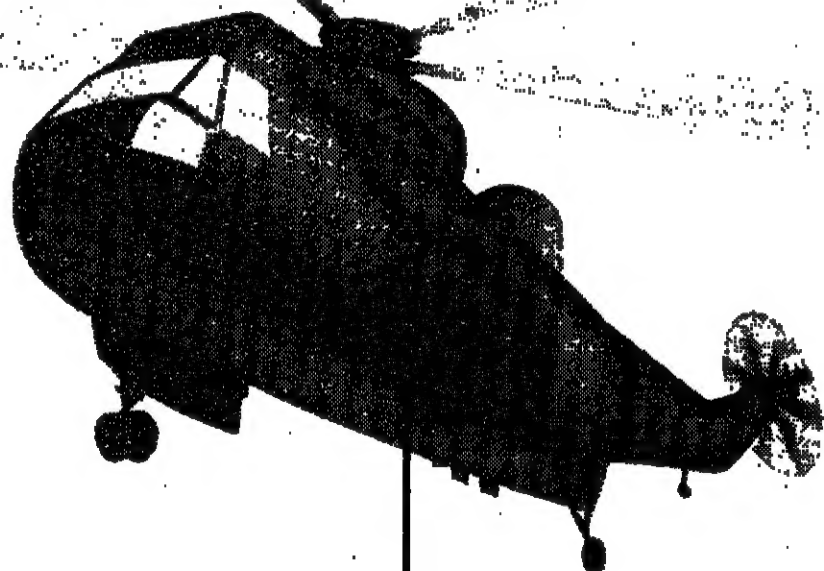
Ethnic Indians holding British Dependent Territory Citizen (BDTC) passports have argued that under the present arrangements their great-grandchildren will be stateless, since the Chinese Government will not automatically grant them the status of citizens of "Hong Kong, China" which is expected to be accorded eventually to all ethnic Chinese here.

More than three million ethnic Chinese in Hong Kong are entitled to BDTC passports, which however do not accord them automatic right of entry or abode in the UK.

The Hong Kong Government proposes to introduce a new passport for "British nationals (overseas)", which would state that the holder had the right of abode in Hong Kong, but would be valid only if the holder had a Hong Kong identity card. This proposal is still controversial.

Closed door, page 10

Westland announce a helpline for their shareholders.



To have your say, you may either attend Tuesday's meeting in London or get your proxy to the registrars in Bristol by 10.30am Sunday 12th January at the latest.

Here's one further proxy form.

To help you meet the deadline, you can deliver it to us at any of the addresses opposite between 9.00am and 5.00pm Friday or Saturday.

We'll then get it delivered for you.

If you don't get it to us by 5.00pm on Saturday, we won't be able to get it there in time.

National Westminster Bank PLC, New Issues Dept, PO Box 79, 2 Princes St, London EC2P 2BD.
National Westminster Bank PLC, Registrar's Dept, PO Box 82, 37 Broad St, Bristol BS99 7NH.
Westland plc, Winterstoke Road, Weston-super-Mare, Avon BS24 9AB.
Westland plc, Yeovil, Somerset BA20 2YB.
British Hovercraft Corporation, East Cowes, Isle of Wight PO32 6RH.

If you have difficulty in returning your proxy in time you can call 01-583 1398 between 10.00am and 8.00pm Friday or Saturday and we'll do our best to help you.

Don't forget. The Westland Board strongly recommend the partnership with UTC/Fiat.

FOR USE BY WESTLAND SHAREHOLDERS ONLY

Please return the proxy form to The Registrar, Westland plc, National Westminster Bank PLC, Registrar's Department, P.O. Box 82, 37 Broad Street, Bristol BS99 7YA.

Form of Proxy for use at the Extraordinary General Meeting of Westland plc ("the Company") to be held on Tuesday, 14th January, 1986.

I/We the undersigned being (a) member(s) of the Company, hereby appoint the Chairman of the

Meeting or (see note 1).

as my/our proxy to vote for me/us on my/our behalf at the Extraordinary General Meeting of the Company convened for 10.30am on 14th January, 1986 and at any adjournment thereof.

I/We direct that my/our vote(s) be cast on the resolutions referred to in the Notice of Meeting as indicated by an X as shown opposite and on any other resolution in such manner as my/our proxy thinks fit:

Date:

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS

Signature(s):

Name(s) in full:

Address(es):

RESOLUTIONS:	FOR	AGAINST
Number 1: Ordinary Resolution		
Number 2: Special Resolution		
Number 3: Special Resolution		

Notes
1 If you wish to appoint any other person as your proxy, who need not be a Member of the Company, please delete the words "the Chairman of the Meeting", and insert the name and address of your proxy.
2 Please indicate how you wish the proxy to vote in respect of the resolutions. If no indication is given, the proxy will have discretion as to whether and how to vote.
3 To be valid this proxy form must be completed with the power of attorney or other authority, if any, under which it is signed or a notary public certificate (which must be lodged with the Company's Registrar, National Westminster Bank PLC, Registrar's Department, P.O. Box 82, 37 Broad Street, Bristol BS99 7YA) not later than 48 hours before the time fixed for the meeting or adjourned meeting.
4 In the case of a corporation, the proxy form must be executed under its common seal or signed on its behalf by a duly authorized officer.
5 In the case of joint holders the vote of the senior holder that tenders a vote will be accepted to the exclusion of the votes of the other joint holders and the senior holder must be determined by the order in which the names stand in the register, but the names of all holders must be shown.
6 Any alteration to this proxy form should be cancelled.

WESTLAND

Reagan's Libya boycott

Paris backs US prepared for a long haul to punish Gadaffi on sanctions

By Our Foreign Staff

France has agreed to seek an urgent EEC meeting to discuss US calls for sanctions against Libya, the Foreign Ministry in Paris said yesterday.

The meeting had been suggested by Italy and Greece. An emergency meeting can be considered only if three EEC states call for one. No date has been suggested.

In London the Foreign Office said it would consider any proposals for a special meeting of EEC foreign ministers to discuss closer co-ordination in the fight against terrorism. Officials said it was up to the Dutch, who now hold the EEC presidency, to call such a meeting.

Meanwhile Canadian officials said they had urged Canadian businesses not to undermine US sanctions against Libya. The Ottawa Government is considering further steps requested by Washington.

In Ankara Mr Turgut Ozal, the Turkish Prime Minister, said Turkey's ties with Tripoli took priority over US calls for sanctions.

"Turkey has long-standing good relations with Libya. Therefore, we view this [call] in this respect," he told reporters.

"Our relations are more on an economic basis and Turkey has long-term ties with Libya. We cannot ignore this."

Egypt, one of Washington's chief Arab allies, said it would not follow the US example and withdraw its workers from neighbouring Libya.

Mr Abdel-Halim Abu Ghazala, the Defence Minister, in a cautious first official reaction to President Reagan's call, said: "If the United States decides to do that, it is its own business and we have no right to comment."

In Addis Ababa the Organization of African Unity came out in support of Libya but called on both parties to exercise restraint in order to create dialogue.

In Tunis Arab foreign, economy, and finance ministers will meet next Monday for a special session of the Arab League ministerial council to discuss the US measures. The meeting is at Libya's request.

From Christopher Thomas, Washington

The White House, dismayed but undaunted by Western Europe's refusal to join President Reagan's economic boycott of Libya, said yesterday that punishing Colonel Gadaffi, the Libyan leader, for supporting terrorism would be "a long process" and that "we are in for a long haul".

Mr Reagan has launched a diplomatic offensive to persuade friendly European and Arab countries that they are dangerously exposed to Colonel Gadaffi's terrorism and that it is in their interests to impose sanctions. The Administration may send an emissary to Europe to encourage a more sympathetic response to the American position.

Mr Robert Oakley, the Administration's counter-terrorism expert, said yesterday that the US was "not lecturing" friendly countries, but America shared a common concern with Western European and moderate Arab Governments that had been threatened by international terrorism. Among examples, he cited the siege of the Libyan Embassy in London.

He emphasized that the US was offering to work with European and moderate Arab governments. "We will see whether or not the offer is seized. The opportunity is there." There was already some co-operation with moderate Arab countries, "but there are obviously limitations".

He said Western Europe was now experiencing terrorism that originated in the Middle East, a development that was going to make it too costly to continue "business as usual" with Libya. Moderate Arab governments, too, were threatened.

The Administration acknowledges that neither its economic boycott nor its freezing of Libyan assets in the US will have any serious effect on the Libyan economy, but hopes the attitude of friendly governments towards Colonel Gadaffi. Libya has mainly cash in the United States probably no more than \$400 million (£280 million).

Public rift in Bonn

From Frank Johnson, Bonn

The United States and West Germany aired their disagreement over sanctions on Libya yesterday, with conflicting public comments, however courteously phrased, by the Chancellor, Herr Helmut Kohl, and the US Ambassador, Mr Richard Burt.

Herr Kohl told a press conference that as Chancellor he must especially consider the 1,500 West Germans living in Libya.

The federal republic, unlike the United States, had no oil wells of its own and relied on Libya for a high proportion of its oil imports, he said. "In any case, the amount of credit for export business with Libya has been cut since I took office, from DM10 billion to DM7 billion at the present time."

Herr Kohl said Bonn would take part in any consultations concerning the struggle against terrorism. His government had "unmistakable suspicions" and "a range of evidence" that Libya was responsible for the

Rome and Vienna airport attacks.

This was the only point of agreement between Herr Kohl and Mr Burt. The ambassador took the unusual step of calling a press conference to advocate a policy already rejected by the West German view that sanctions were unworkable. Mr Burt said it was "an academic argument".

There were cases where they seemed to have worked. Using an example which many in Britain would dispute, he added: "Rhodesia is just one of them. There are others."

Mr Burt depicted Libya as being as much of a threat to West Germany as to the US, mentioning the murder of a Libyan dissident in Bonn last April in which two Germans were wounded.

Mr Burt later met the Foreign Minister, Herr Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the Cabinet's strongest opponent of sanctions.

Rome curbs arms sales and workers

From John Earle, Rome

Italy is to ban arms sales to Libya and to forbid its citizens from taking jobs left vacant by the withdrawal of expatriate Americans, the Foreign Minister, Signor Giulio Andreotti, said here yesterday.

He made the announcement after a four-hour meeting of the inner cabinet called to discuss a letter from President Reagan to the Prime Minister, Signor Bettino Craxi, urging Italy to impose economic sanctions as a reprisal for Libya's support for Palestinian terrorism.

Italy is not prepared to comply with the US request on its own, but has asked for a meeting of European Community foreign ministers to take a common stand. "We are convinced that it is Europe as a whole which must give a reply to the American position," Signor Andreotti said. He added that initiatives to combat terrorism must also take into account the political problems of the Middle East in general.

Signor Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, the Interior Minister, is to visit Vienna, London, and Paris, urging closer European collaboration and exchanges of information against terrorism.

He declined to comment on the coming visit to southern Africa of the Commonwealth group of eminent persons which is seeking to promote dialogue between Pretoria and representative black leaders towards ending apartheid.

The minister said that as a result of his talks with Mrs Thatcher and other members of her government, there no longer remained any obstacle in the way of normalizing diplomatic relations between London and Lagos. "We are back on track."

Asked whether he would advise President Babangida to upgrade diplomatic relations between Britain and Nigeria to the level of high commissioners, he said: "I will leave you to draw your own conclusions."

The two countries withdrew their high commissioners after the attempt to kidnap Mr Umaru Dikko, a former Nigerian minister, from London in July 1984.

Healing touch, page 10
Debt deadlock, page 15

The brutal murder of a Belgian arms salesman by what appear to be professional killers is the subject of a large-scale police inquiry here.

Mr Juan Mendes Flaya, Latin America sales manager for Belgium's largest arms manufacturer, Fabrique Nationale Herstal, was found with six 9mm pistol bullets in his body in a locked car on the Brussels-Namur motorway on Tuesday.

The Public Prosecutor's office in the small town of Nivelles, near where the body was found by a motorist, said that the police had nothing to go on in the search for the killer, but it added that the inquiry would not ignore the possibility, "however remote", of terrorist involvement.

The Public Prosecutor, Mr Jean de Preter, said that the Madrid-born salesman was now a Belgian citizen, and there was nothing to link him to Basque terrorism or to the IRA. No organization had admitted the killing, he said.

But Mr Robert Sauvage, acting spokesman for FN Herstal, suggested that the killing might somehow be connected with a burglary at the home of Mr Mendes two years ago when a personal collection of arms was stolen.

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Long and vicious battle looms over French Bill on work hours

From Diana Geddes, Paris

By special decree of President Mitterrand, the outgoing French Parliament, which was supposed to have wound up its business at Christmas in preparation for the lead-up to the general election on March 16, was re-opened in an extraordinary session yesterday to debate the Government's "hotly-contested Bill on flexible working hours."

The Bill, which is opposed by employers and unions, would break the present rigid mould of the 39-hour working week. It would allow management to require employees to work up to 41 hours a week, without overtime pay, provided the average working week over the year did not exceed 38 hours, or up to 44 hours a week, provided the average working week did not exceed 37½ hours.

The moderate Force Ouvrière union organization has condemned the Bill as "dangerous" and likely to lead to anarchy. The Communist-led CGT union says it will destroy fundamental union rights, leading to wage cuts and an increase in unemployment, and an increase in the powers of the employers. The CGT has vowed to fight the Bill tooth and nail. Of the three main union organizations, only the Socialist CFTD has approved the proposed measures. It agrees with

the Government that greater flexibility in work conditions is necessary to modernize French industry and therefore is an essential weapon in the fight against unemployment.

The main employers association, the CNPF, dislikes the Bill on the ground that it does not go far enough. It wants "real flexibility", including the freedom to lay off workers without the need for prior government permission; fewer restrictions in the conditions attached to employing new workers.

Some were surprised that the Government decided to revive what is likely to be a long and vicious battle so soon before the elections. But the alternative was to be accused of weakness in the face of the onslaught by its erstwhile colleagues, the Communists, which would have been disastrous for the Government's image.

The Bill, first presented to Parliament last November, has passed its first reading in the National Assembly and now comes before the Senate. However, the Communists have tabled more than 300 amendments and the right-wing majority in the Senate also plans to propose radical changes. The Bill, therefore, may yet be lost because of lack of time.

Head of Dhaka University quits over campus clash

From Ahmed Fazl, Dhaka

The chief of Dhaka University resigned yesterday as campus tension mounted in the wake of armed clashes on Wednesday between student groups for and against the Government.

Professor Shamsul Huq, Vice-Chancellor of the university, told reporters he had submitted his resignation to President Ershad because of his inability to run the campus plagued by student unrest since August 1985 when it re-opened after six months of forced closure.

"I cannot run the university if students brandish arms on the campus," Professor Huq said.

University officials said students were leaving residential hostels on the campus yesterday fearing fresh outbreaks of violence.

At least 100 students were wounded on Wednesday as supporters of the pro-Ershad New Bangla Students Society clashed with members of the rival Central Students Action Committee which leads an alliance of 14 opposition student groups. Guns, bombs and iron rods were used.

Eyewitnesses said shots were fired in the air and bombs exploded in the central arts faculty building as most students fled in panic.

Dis-moi, jolie droite, pourquoi as-tu de si grandes dents?



Aid delays said to put 4m at risk

By Paul Valley and Gill Lusk

Oxfam and the Save the Children Fund have made a joint appeal for action by the British Government over the continuing famine in the west of Sudan where food aid will run out in the next two weeks.

The lives of some four million people in the western provinces of Darfour and Kordofan are being put needlessly at risk because of delays in the international aid pipeline, according to Mr Nick Winer, Oxfam's recently returned field director in Sudan.

The agencies have made their joint appeal for food aid and cash to provide transport within Sudan to Mr Timothy Raison, Minister for Overseas Development. They have made similar appeals to the United States Government, the EEC and the United Nations.

It action was not immediate all the advances of last year would be lost, Mr Winer said.

Band Aid has decided to divert \$3 million (£2.1 million) earmarked for long-term development into immediate relief work.

Farmers shed few tears as agriculture secretary quits

From Our Own Correspondent Washington

to the day-to-day running of his farm, which is managed by his son, Hans, aged 26, who knew nothing about his father's resignation until he heard it on the radio.

The day before the announcement on Tuesday, Mr Block appeared on CBS television to say he was not planning to quit. He was obviously embarrassed at the untruth when he announced his departure, and by way of explanation said merely that it was time to go now he had steered the new Farm Bill into law.

That Bill, signed last month by President Reagan, trimmed

several farm support measures but fell far short of the swinging cuts the White House had sought from Congress.

It was the first time since Roosevelt's "New Deal" that any government had attempted a significant step towards achieving free-market agriculture. Even so, commodity price supports will cost a record \$54 billion (£37 billion) over the next three years, a sure sign that the White House and Congress remain significantly at odds on the extent to which American farmers should be helped.

Farmers have been going bankrupt at record rates because of a combination of falling land prices, high interest rates and low commodity prices. Although most farmers are Republicans, Democrats have made important inroads into the farm vote and hope to capitalize on the crisis in November's mid-term elections.

Mr Block, whose eternal optimism about the state of farming infuriated the farm belt, insisted with a smile that "we have set the stage for real recovery". As for his future, he was considering some "exciting possibilities".



Mr Block: Hog farmer with worries

Post chief's sacking may lead to US revamp

From Christopher Thomas Washington

The summary and unprecedented sacking this week of Mr Paul Carlin, America's Postmaster-General, after only a year in the job has cleared the way for a sweeping management purge, swinging cost-cutting measures and - the White House hopes - the eventual total handover of the monopoly business to private industry.

Mr Carlin was fired by the US Postal Service's board of governors amid accusations that he moved too slowly to reduce the bloated headquarters staff in Washington and failed to master key details of his job. It was a humiliating public departure for a largely unknown insider who spent a lifetime climbing through the postal bureaucracy.

The postal service board, once a toothless body, has become extremely aggressive since President Reagan began appointing conservative, business-minded members. Clearly felt that Mr Carlin had failed to improve the postal service's dismal reputation for late and lost mail. In particular, it has privately criticized his choice of computers for automatic sorting.

The new Postmaster-General is Mr Albert Casey, aged 66, a Harvard-trained businessman with a string of executive successes behind him. He is best known for turning American Airlines from a moribund company into a lean and efficient profit-maker.

The postal service moved from a department of the federal Government to a quasi-private corporation in 1971. The appointment of a conservative outsider signals the Government's determination to run the service strictly as a business. In the year up to September 30 last year, the service lost \$250 million, despite a series of cost-cutting exercises, including salary reductions. This year, it is now probably running at a profit.

A well-connected trade newsletter, *Business Mailers Review*, said as long ago as March that the Government was unhappy with Mr Carlin's performance, and the continued low quality of delivery standards. Last month the publication reported that the postal governors were unhappy with Mr Carlin for refusing to go along with plans for massive lay-offs. Indeed, the workforce rose from 702,000 to 740,000 during his tenure.

Tehran gets tough with draft dodgers

Tehran (Reuters) - The Iranian Parliament voted to stiffen conditions of national service, approving a Bill that all drafted soldiers should spend one year in operational zones on the Gulf war front or in north-west Kurdistan.

Speakers said they wanted the amendments to prevent people from using influence to get soft postings for relatives in Tehran or provincial cities and to make life more difficult for draft-dodgers.

The draft board chief said that after a three-month grace period men who failed to register would have to serve three to six months extra in the armed forces after being caught.

Swiss order out Czech envoy

Berne (Reuters) - Switzerland has ordered expulsion of a Czechoslovak diplomat because it says, he collected information on his compatriots living in that country, the public prosecutor's office said.

The office said the man abused his post to study methods of escape from Czechoslovakia used by emigrants and the personal, family and business connections of Czechoslovaks.

City hall riot

Sao Luis, Brazil (AFP) - Thousands of dismissed municipal employees stoned and burnt the city hall in this provincial capital in the state of Maranhão after the new woman mayor carried out a campaign promise by sacking 14,500 people.

Walking taller

Tokyo (Reuters) - Japanese are getting taller, with most of the growth in their legs, the Education Ministry reported. A survey showed that 17-year-old boys were 2 inches taller than their counterparts of 25 years ago, and girls 1.5 inches taller.

Peru switch

Lima (AFP) - Señor Remigio Morales Bermúdez, son of Peru's last military President, was named Minister for Food and Agriculture when Señor Mario Bartaurea resigned after being attacked for shortages and high prices. Señor Bartaurea blamed government-imposed prices which did not cover production costs.

SENSOR

Hitachi began giving the powers of perception to machines long ago. More than 50 years ago, in fact, with the development of a bimetal thermostat to control cooling temperatures in electric refrigerators back in 1928. The legacy: Electrical equipment capable of seeing, hearing and even touching as humans do, but with much greater acuteness and accuracy.

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WE BELIEVE SENSORS ARE THE LINK BETWEEN HUMAN NEEDS AND TECHNOLOGY

SPECTRUM

Green, clean and fighting on

Ralph Nader, veteran American campaigner for the small man's rights, will be in Britain next week with a new target - reform of the 75-year-old Official Secrets Act

He has been called a saint, a prophet, the conscience of America. For 20 years he has fought the industrial titans, challenged the corporate giants almost single-handedly from a dingy, cluttered office in the fashionable part of Washington.

Armed only with a searing zeal and the dedication of a crusading social critic, he has triumphed beyond any of his disciples' dreams. Ralph Nader, the ascetic, uncompromising idealist, has wrought a quiet revolution. American capitalism will never be the same.

Like most prophets, he is taken for granted and almost forgotten in his own country. In the past two decades dozens of environmental and consumer protection laws have been passed, with legislation on car safety, clean air, clean water and freedom of information. It comes as a surprise to many to find that Nader, the folk hero of the protest generation of the 1960s and '70s, is still around, still campaigning.

He is 51 now and a little grey at the temples, but no mellow. Years of struggle against big business and government have kept him lean and combative. Nader, always reluctant to acknowledge his own success in establishing the principles of consumer protection, regulations enforcing social responsibility on big corporations and the rights of the ordinary citizen, had identified new abuses, taken aim at new targets: energy costs, tax reform, access to the airways, health care.

His vision is of a society controlling its own resources

New citizen and consumer groups have been founded, and "Nader's raiders", the hundreds of student disciples who poked their noses into every aspect of business and government in the 1960s, have taken their causes into the heartland, the boardroom and even overseas.

Next Tuesday Nader will be taking part in a rally in London marking the 75th anniversary of the Official Secrets Act. He will join speakers including Roy Hattersley, MP, David Steel, MP, Clive Ponting and Sarah Tisdall (both prosecuted under the Act) who want to see the law reformed.

But he has got a bigger fight back home. Government intervention there is out of fashion and Nader is now battling to preserve his earlier successes and fight the Reagan administration's attempts to soften the interpretation of regulatory laws, many of which are being denounced as burdensome and bureaucratic. "Reagan's changes in enforcing the rules are a total disgrace - often criminal", he said.



Giving people the power and confidence to sue has long been a prime goal of his movement

distant, impersonal figure to retain his integrity. He never accepts hospitality, never falls for the frivolities of the jet-set, never calls senators by their first names. "I did once, with a senator from Michigan, and when it came to lay it on him, I had to think twice. I had been to dinner at his home. But I resolved it - I went ahead and criticized him publicly - roasted him, actually."

Remaining at arm's length, like an attorney, Nader has an invincible belief in the power of the law. The courts have always been his preferred forum of redress. Giving people the power and confidence to sue has long been a prime goal of his movement. And for a man who has savoured his greatest victories in the courtroom, he is peculiarly loath to criticize America's incessant litigation, its fixation with lawsuits.

Naturally, he denounces corrupt lawyers, the sharks who sue in the hope of getting half the award. But he disputes the claims that malpractice suits are driving doctors out of business, that insurance costs are rocketing because of absurd damages awards.

Nader believes that his opponents conspire to change public opinion and make it more difficult for the "victim class" to sue.

In many ways, America has adjusted to Nader. There are now consumer watchdogs in every State legislature, consumer affairs departments in every big business. Nader concedes that some of his early demands have been institutionalized, but insists that changes have come not from corporate altruism but from the naked threat of boycotts, adverse publicity and lawsuits.

The times may be out of joint for him politically, as Reagan's America has tired of self-flagellation, of searching its conscience. But Nader has not changed or adapted to the more optimistic, self-indulgent mood around him. He fights on, anxious only to generate enough publicity to keep up the momentum, rekindle the cause in the heartland. He is one of America's best known names overseas. Britain will soon find he is not one of its most accommodating visitors.

Michael Binyon

pollution standards. He does not own a car; the irony of his passion is its selfishness.

Nader, the exemplary public citizen, is the antithesis of the American consumer. An abstemious bachelor, he has few personal possessions. He still lives in rented rooms and wears the same unfashionable suit and thick army socks he bought in a batch years ago.

Now he is battling to preserve his earlier successes

Shunning the celebrity circuit, he gives away most of the money he earns from books and lectures and lives in monkish poverty. He forces the same shoe-string conditions on his helpers: "They wouldn't have the fire in their bellies if you paid them a conventional salary."

Nader's ultimate vision is of a society controlling its own resources. Consumers must band together for economic self-determination and resist the growth of the corporate

state. Government must be kept honest by constant vigilance. In many ways Nader is the prototype American "Green".

Small is beautiful, for him. He wants little less than the reordering of American economic life with the revival of co-operative institutions of all kinds: food stores, energy concerns, communications, home repair centres.

He is campaigning for state-backed citizen utility boards to keep down the cost of electricity and gas. He wants to break the monopoly of the television networks, the power of the insurance companies, the "imperialism of multi-national corporation."

It is a left-wing, somewhat anarchic, ideology. Like that of the West German Greens (whom he admires), there is little room for fun or human folly, for economic growth or entrepreneurial free-wheeling. But in person a human warmth and humour comes through his somewhat joyless vision. When asked to define himself, he always replies: "Full-time citizen, the most important office in America."

But Nader has had to remain a

Keeping a watchful eye on local crime

The crackdown on crime launched this week at a Downing Street seminar has produced plans for a new British standard to beat car thefts and insurance incentives to deter burglaries. This report tells how being good neighbours can also play its part

Last spring we started a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in our street in Battersea, south-west London, because crime in the area was getting so bad we felt we didn't have a choice.

The grim cycle of burglaries, car break-ins, thefts and muggings seemed to be quickening. And so much happened in broad daylight, like the time our vehicle was "dosed."

Distracted by having to unload six boisterous kids, my wife left her handbag on the back seat and locked the car. She returned to the car only minutes later but a side window had been shattered and the bag had gone. Ours isn't a particularly quiet street, but apparently no one saw anything.

Although obviously idealistic, the Neighbourhood Watch literature given to us made sense, with ordinary citizens lending an eye and ear to the police. But to be effective, Watches must break through two giant British social barriers - apathy and reserve. We are just not nosy enough.

At first there was a lull for the worse under our Watch. A young girl three doors down from us was mugged by two men yards from her gate. It was another daylight attack, and so casual that one of the robbers, having walked off, turned and stroked back to where the terrified girl had fallen to make sure nothing else had fallen from her bag.

People were in the street at the time and cars were going up and down, but no one came to her help. It was possible they didn't realize what was happening. Depressing news, which we hammered home in a newsletter: Shout if someone is attacking; shout "I'm being robbed" so people will know you're not skylarking.

Then a dramatic break-through. One of our assistant co-ordinators saw two youths walking up our street, trying door handles on cars and peering inside. He rushed indoors for his Polaroid camera and snapped the culprits in action. The police were called (remember dial 999 and not the local station if you see a crime committed) and the youths were promptly caught.

Our home beat officer, PC Charles Bailey, arrived with some alarming statistics. The month the youths were caught there had been 51 motor vehicle crimes in our zone, a 25 per cent increase on the previous month's figure. Twelve new or newish cars had been stolen.

"But you mustn't get disheartened," he reassured us. "Burglaries, on the other hand, are on the way down."

PC Bailey always urges us to let the police know if we think anything is wrong: "It doesn't matter how many times you call, you're not troubling us."

The police tell us to be vigilant but not vigilantes. "We do not want the formation of any citizens' street patrols," said Supt Brian Turner, the crime prevention officer in charge of London's Neighbourhood Watch schemes.

"We are painfully aware of how Watches can get into the wrong hands. We are monitoring the situation carefully."

Although there are now more than 7,000 Watch systems in England, Scotland and Wales, there are none in Ulster. "Communication between police and the public is a delicate business with the atmosphere as it is in the province," said a spokesman for the RUC.

"If we set up Neighbourhood Watches, the paramilitaries would almost certainly take them over. Instead, we have an answerphone system where people can report local crime under a cloak of anonymity."

Supt Turner was one of several senior British policemen to visit the United States to look at long-established community policing plans before British pilot schemes were set up in the spring of 1983.

He was impressed with what he saw in Seattle, where they have a system called Block Watch, with 15 fully-employed civilians working in liaison with the police. "They only have half a million people in Seattle, but in London we have seven million. I'd love a scheme like Block Watch but we just don't have the resources."

The effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch in Britain is open to debate. Whereas statistics show an overall picture of gloom, with spiralling crime against person and property, Home Office figures recently published show that in Avon and Somerset, areas where Watch schemes were first launched, crime has fallen by 22 per cent.

But there is still resistance. A friend of mine, a university lecturer, lives in another high-crime area of south London and has been burgled three times in as many months. But he says: "Neighbourhood Watch doesn't work. It's a panacea devised by the police to calm the middle classes because they can do nothing about the crime problem."

Since our Watch started, we might not have made dramatic inroads on the crime figures, but some of that old British reserve has been melted away and we know each other better. We have also been able to reassure one or two old people who have been living in a state of semi-siege - the bombardment of bad news from the media convincing them that they'll get mugged as soon as they step outside their doors."

Chris Greenwood

Ringling in the changes as the switchboard battle begins

By early summer telephone users in Britain will have a choice of systems. But will the average caller really benefit?



Mercury's microwave and landlines linking main towns

A new era of competition in telecommunications is about to dawn. Mercury Communications, the Cable and Wireless subsidiary licensed by the Government to challenge British Telecom's monopoly, takes delivery next month of four Northern Telecom main digital exchanges. The network it is constructing will be in a position to go live by the early summer when, for the first time in Britain, there will be an alternative telephone operator.

The effect of competition on tariffs will be far-reaching. Most long-distance calls will get cheaper but the cost of local calls in many areas will rise sharply as will the cost of renting a domestic line.

Big businesses such as the major banks with extremely large telephone bills will be the main beneficiaries. The losers will be domestic telephone users who do not make many long-distance calls.

Mercury is laying more than 1,000 kilometres of optical fibre cable in concrete ducts along the side of railway lines, allowing customers to link up to a figure-of-eight network connecting Birmingham with London, Bristol, Leeds and Manchester. There will also be microwave radio links to other business centres.

At the same time the company is building a series of local telephone networks. In the City, Mercury is using London's intricate network of underground ducts, including the 184-mile pipe distribution system

of the call and forcing British Telecom to make most of the local connections at each end.

To have duplicated the whole of the British Telecom network of more than 20 million lines would not only have been uneconomic but also impossible to achieve quickly. Professor Carsberg, the Government's managing director, aims to undercut British Telecom charges by more than 10 per cent on all calls of over 35 miles.

"We are playing a £6 billion market with technology that allows us to have a dramatically lower cost base than British Telecom," he says. "They are saddled with an overmanned, antiquated network. We are starting from scratch with the best technology that Britain and the rest of the world offer."

Mercury is already offering "leased lines" to customers allowing big businesses direct connection between their offices around Britain and internationally. An example of this is the line Mercury leases to the TSB for providing a high-speed digital link between its computer centres in Milton Keynes and Wythenshawe.

The first dialled calls allowing Mercury customers to connect to the new network through British Telecom lines will begin in May. Mercury technicians will initially adapt company PABXs (small private telephone exchanges) enabling the operator to press a button and have the call routed via Mercury rather than British Telecom.

will be programmed by the Mercury customer to decide automatically when to use which system. If there is an 'O' in front of the number, indicating a long-distance call, the PABX would automatically choose Mercury.

If Mercury expands its customer base too quickly in the early months the quality of service may be damaged. Even so, Mr Owen expects to be able to offer his service to ordinary domestic telephone users by the end of next year.

An ordinary British Telecom phone could not at present be connected to the Mercury network because the companies use different technologies. But a combined phone which will be able to address both systems will be available soon. Mr Owen calculates that for all those whose trunk calls normally cost more than £60 a year it will be

worth buying such a phone and becoming a Mercury customer. For those of us who use a phone mainly for local calls, however, there are few advantages in the new competitive environment. Indeed British Telecom has said that in order to meet price competition from Mercury on long-distance calls, it will be raising its domestic rental and local call charges much more rapidly than it would have done.

Professor Carsberg has been firing off some strongly worded warnings to British Telecom on the way it is going about this "rebalancing" process yet the fact remains that there is little in the newly privatized corporation's license, or in the voluntary undertakings it has given, to prevent a very rapid rise in telephone rental and local call charges.

For Cable and Wireless, which runs telecommunications systems internationally, it is the chance of the decade. City stock brokers analysts expect Mercury to be earning more than £300 million a year by 1990. That will enable it to pose a considerable threat to BT's traditional market through the next two decades.

Jeremy Warner

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CONCISE CROSSWORD (No 845)

ACROSS
1 Beat soundly (6)
5 Spread untidily (6)
6 Split (3)
9 Dinner jacket (6)
10 Stretch (6)
11 Tableland (4)
12 Graze (8)
14 Hawk (6)
17 Shot piece (6)
19 Sessile (3,2,3)
22 Nub (4)
24 Dirty (6)
25 Died down (6)
26 Young flower (3)
27 Repeat (6)
28 Tribal leaders (6)

DOWN
2 Sharp (5)
3 Down wind (7)
4 Having contempt (7)
5 Asparagus piece (5)
6 Local taxes (5)
7 Charming (7)
13 Dread (3)
15 Escape (7)
16 Untruth (3)
17 Permeate (7)
18 Straggler (7)
20 As well (5)
21 Perhaps (5)
23 Guide (5)

SOLUTION TO No 844

ACROSS: 1 Belles lettres 9 Eve 10 Dramatise 11 Total 13 Tugboat 16 Calmer 19 Usury 22 Last-ditch 24 Lea 25 Chronological DOWN: 1 Absent 2 Client 3 Pendulum 4 Plant 5 Stom 6 Cruise 7 Ascend 12 Owl 14 Roughage 15 Nor 16 Calico 17 Absent 18 Rattle 20 Unluck 21 Yearly 23 Dank

FRIDAY PAGE

Under the influence of heavy metal

Interior designer Eva Jiricna's use of industrial materials like rubber, plastic, glass and black steel is transforming the style of our homes and furniture



Hi-tech interior: Eva Jiricna's futuristic styling at the flat of fashion designer Joseph Ettedgui and (right) the artist herself

One enters a very ugly block of flats in Hampstead. Built in 1922, it exudes all the gloom of the worst sort of design - the uninviting staircases, the sad corridors. Then you are let into one particular flat and your brain is forced into a complex series of double takes.

You are in a tiny hall. It is quite dark but there are vivid yellows and greens glaring at you from carefully-judged pools of light. One wall consists entirely of mirrors, the other is covered with bright green, studded rubber floor tiles. On the floor itself is a plastic mesh which raises you about half an inch above some green vinyl. At the end of the hall there is a microwave cooker. Two sliding doors suggest possible exits - both are black and both have port-hole windows.

Everything in the kitchen and bathroom is covered in the green rubber. In the first living room there are more mirrors and a sitting area which can be isolated with vertical blinds. There is a lift-belt on the wall and a set of the kind of inflatable floats which children use in swimming pools.

And so it goes on. For this is the home of Eva Jiricna who has now established herself as unquestionably the most influential interior designer in this country. It was she, for example, who first thought of using industrial studded rubber in the home and now they sell it in Habitat. Her shop designs for Joseph Ettedgui (known to everybody as Joseph) have changed every high street.

Recently she has transformed the Way In department at Harrods from an amiable mess into a slick black and grey fantasy - a new Jiricna-designed restaurant owned by her faithful patron Joseph is to open at the end of this month and she is even converting a flat in Wandsworth for the Thompson Twins.

Finally she was responsible for most of the interior of Richard Rogers's new Lloyd's building in the City of London - although a sudden outbreak of philistinism in the committee meant her designs for the top two floors were rejected.

Eva Jiricna is, you might say, the flavour of the month. But at the personal level it is an acquired taste. She was born in Czechoslovakia in 1939, the daughter of an architect. She intended to study chemistry but changed at the last minute to architecture. At a convention in 1967 she met an architect from the Greater London Council who offered her a job. It took a year for her to obtain the necessary permission from the authorities and she finally arrived on August 1, 1968.

Three weeks later the Russians invaded. She was out of her family. Going back was out of the question - people were being asked to sign documents saying they approved of the invasion and, in any case, Czechs abroad for whatever reason were being made to feel like traitors.

But after a year there were still no signs of a thaw. In addition she had grown bored at the GLC so she wrote to every architectural firm which had advertised for staff in one trade magazine.

She ended up with the bizarre task of building the Brighton Marina for the firm of Louis de Soissons. "It was great experience. I wanted to work with water - we had no sea in Czechoslovakia - and there we were constructing huge breakwaters and pouring tons of concrete into the sea." The job lasted almost ten years.

"I started looking for something to do on my own. Then I met Joseph at a party to celebrate the opening of the shop Norman Foster had designed for him. He asked me to do the small Kenzo shop in Sloane Street. I still don't know why. He had very little confidence in me and I was terrified - I was crazy to go from Brighton Marina to this little shop."

In the event it worked brilliantly and she went on to design Joseph's flat. Something about the style caught on -



the flat was featured in just about every architectural magazine and she was a hit - the domestic version of Richard Rogers and Norman Foster.

"I don't know what it was about the style. I suppose it looked a bit unusual with all the industrial materials. I've never used wallpaper in my life and I just don't like decorating. I try and look at interiors objectively - I don't start out thinking I have to use wallpaper like a lot of designers do."

The point was that she stuck to what she knew - industrial materials and processes. As a result she seemed to be inventing interior design from scratch. For the doors in Joseph's flat, for example, she wanted to use Glass Reinforced Plastic, an industrial material that makes no sense in the home because of the cost of making moulds. But she couldn't stand the sight of any of the sliding doors on offer so she made her own moulds out of glass and timber and produced the doors within her own price limit.

Such explanations flow from her in the husky monotone. She constantly stresses the logical and functional nature of her decisions, making them sound inevitable, obvious. Her description of how she designed the room we are sitting in is a masterpiece of her understated style.

"I wanted this drawing board as large as possible because that is the most enjoyable part of one's life - working at the drawing board and listening to the radio or watching television," she indicates the Sony which is disdainfully watching us from the end of a black steel bracket.

"Then I had to have storage in here. On a plan you immediately see that the right amount of storage would fill the whole room. So you raise the bed over the storage chests. Then you have to get up to your bed. A ladder would get in the way - so you climb this little space here up these metal boxes. These can be taken out and used as stools."

"Then you have to have a shelf for the TV, for books and so on and so on. I

use perforated metal so I can see what is in the shelves. I wanted the cheapest material so I bought second-hand Dexion and had it painted black. For my shelves I use these metal cable trays."

"I think there is a moral obligation to use all new materials - if there is a good reason for using them - in the best possible way. It's the same with concrete - it's a fantastic material from a construction point of view but it has to be civilized for people to feel comfortable with it."

For most people, of course, their homes just sort of happen with whatever is most conveniently at hand. But, even so, they will have begun to feel the Jiricna influence whether in the form of a kitchen or, perhaps, a daring metal shelving unit. The matter of cheapness and availability will remain relative - she got her green studded rubber, for example, for only £2 a square instead of £16 because it was left over from Norman Foster's Willis Faber building in Ipswich.

But the real point is that Jiricna is more than just the kind of fashionable designer to be found dotted about the glossy magazines. She has invented and perfected a whole new approach based on an encyclopaedic knowledge of materials, a relentlessly methodical approach to every problem and an exceptional eye for detail. Her quality control is formidable - if the tiniest line of welding is visible on a shelving unit it is sent back at once. So an awful lot is sent back - but that is probably just the penalty for always making it new, for insisting on being modern at whatever cost.

"That is the biggest problem," she sighs, "getting people to do what you want..."

Bryan Appleyard

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MEDICAL BRIEFING

Early warning for cancer?

Cervical cancer experts now believe, contrary to current practice, that any woman who has an abnormal cervical smear should be thoroughly investigated as soon as possible.

An abnormal smear does not necessarily mean that cancer is present. More often than not it is simply an early warning that cells on the surface of the cervix have changed. In 20 to 30 per cent of cases there is a chance of progression to cancer, however.

In the UK if a woman's abnormal smear shows only signs of early pre-malignant change (known to doctors as CIN 1 or mild dyskaryosis) or of inflammatory changes, she will usually be asked to come back for another check in three to six months time. This is because it is widely believed that many of these early lesions will revert to normal spontaneously.

A growing body of evidence now suggests that this policy could put women at unnecessary risk. The loudest call for a thorough investigation of all abnormal smears has come from Mr Albert Singer, Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist to the Whittington and Royal Northern Hospitals in London, and his colleagues.

"There are several things which most worry us," Mr Singer said. "We are now able to show that many women with mildly abnormal smears in fact have more serious diseases. In the *British Medical Journal* 18 months ago we reported that a third have a severe pre-cancerous stage and in a very few cases even have cancer."

"There have also been a number of papers

published by other workers which show that a quarter to a third of the so-called inflammatory smears have underlying pre-cancer."

"We are seeing more and more women in whom there has been a history of persistent abnormality, or indeed symptoms of cancer, which have been neglected."

Mr Singer adds that there is growing evidence that the genital wart virus, human papilloma virus (HPV) is responsible for cervical cancer.

In a paper just published in the *British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology* Mr Singer and his colleagues demonstrated that the type of wart virus thought to be most malignant, HPV-type 16, was present in 55 per cent of mildly pre-cancerous lesions. It was present in 90 per cent of cancers.

Mr Singer says that new work is backing this evidence: "There are now in progress studies which are showing that mild abnormalities tend to progress to more serious disease. As well as that we are showing that the DNA configuration in these mild lesions strongly resembles cancer."

"We are now at a point when we can say that anyone who has an abnormal smear should have the cervix examined by colposcopy, a simple investigation which involves looking at the cervix through a microscope. It will show any abnormal tissue at the neck of the womb and this can be immediately and painlessly sampled. Nine out of ten women with pre-cancer can now be successfully treated with the laser or other methods as 'cautery'."

Striking a cord for slimmers

A new study has suggested that simply tying a fixed-length nylon cord around the waist could help a lot more once-fat people stay thin.

Dr John Garrow of the Medical Research Council's clinical research centre at Northwick Park, north-west London, has pioneered the use of such a cord. In his latest, still unpublished, study nearly 40 patients had the chance to use the cord for at least a year (the average time was three years). Fifty per cent managed to keep their weight down and many of those who stopped using the cord did so for reasons other than weight gain such as pregnancy or an operation.

As Dr Garrow explained, people who have been fat often need an artificial indicator of weight gain if they are to keep their weight under control. "For someone who has never been more than 11 or 12 stone, 13 stone is a big difference, but for someone who was once 20 stone and then jumps from 11 or 12 back to 13 stone, it is not recognisably so different."

An eye on lenses

A possible link between the use of soft, extended-wear contact lenses and an excessively high risk of corneal ulceration has come under the scrutiny of the Department of Health.

All contact lenses, hard or soft, can, in theory, cause corneal ulcers. This is because they tend to stop oxygen reaching the cells on the surface of the eye, which then break down, forming an ulcer. Should this become infected, serious trouble can result with potential loss of sight.

The problem is rare among users of "daily wear" contact

lenses as long as the eyes get a routine rest from the lenses and the lenses are kept clean. But there is now a suggestion that extended-wear users may be more prone to ulcers.

In the United States the Food and Drug Administration along with lens makers and eye specialists is conducting a survey to see if the allegations are correct. Privately some observers believe that a lack of hygiene could be at the root of the problem.

In a parliamentary answer given just before Christmas Mr Barclay Hayhoe, a health minister, said he was considering funding research into corneal ulcers and contact lens wear in the UK and said he was arranging the provision by manufacturers of adequate instructions to contact lens wearers.

Doctors' dilemma

If you were standing in a bus queue and a doctor was immediately behind you, would you expect the doctor to point out that you had a skin cancer on your neck that needed treatment or would you prefer to be left in ignorance?

It's a difficult question that has been exercising medical minds in the *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*.

The consensus is that a doctor should tap you on the shoulder and suggest you seek further help.

One argument is that doctors have a duty to act in emergencies which may also involve them in giving unsolicited opinions. There's a caveat to this: the potential benefit of successful treatment must outweigh the psychological stresses, the invasion of privacy and the costs of tests and so on. If the doctor's snap diagnosis turns out to be wrong.

Another opinion is that before the tap on the shoulder doctors must be pretty sure of several things. They must look upon the condition as a serious threat to health, be relatively certain of the diagnosis, and

able to assume that the cancer would remain untreated but for the tap on the shoulder.

Doctors must also be reasonably convinced that the person approached would wish to know there was something wrong, the medical view being that the more serious the illness the stronger the wish.

Finally they should only act if the disease is treatable.

Blind faith

Superstition can play havoc with operating schedules, according to a group of surgeons in Cardiff, who find many patients refuse to succumb to the slab and the knife if they are booked in on Friday 13 - the most recent one was last month.

Mr John Fairclough and colleagues from Cardiff Royal Infirmary set out to test whether there is any evidence to support the superstition and whether more accidents happen on these days. They analysed the attendance figures at the accident and emergency department, comparing the number on each Friday 13 - between 1975 and 1985 - with the number who turned up the Friday before, on Friday 6.

Those people who spend their life touching wood will be disappointed by the results. The range was from 130 on a Friday 13 to 280 on a Friday 6 - the average for Friday 13 was 196 and for Friday 6, 204. These figures are not statistically significant.

Although the surgeons point out that people may be more circumspect on Friday 13 and so less at risk, they tend to believe, more prosaically, that Friday 13 is just another day. For those still unconvinced this year should be relatively calm: only June 13 falls on a Friday. Next year may be more hazardous: 1987 carries three - in February, March and November.

Olivia Timbs and Lorraine Fraser

Putting a price on success

FIRST PERSON

Margaret Duggan

Some time ago I gave up my job. I had worked full-time for 18 years, ever since the youngest of our children was at school. From journalism I moved into public relations and was manager for a national association when I reluctantly decided to call it a day.

For years my husband and I were the classic double-career couple, sharing responsibility for the children and the chores, enabling each other to survive. I also managed some freelance work and wrote the occasional book, and we both coped with the usual DIY jobs around the house.

Then my husband changed his job to one that gives him far more satisfaction, but is so demanding that he no longer has energy for anything but work, sleep, and a weekly round of golf. As marketing manager for an international firm his is under great competitive stress, and often abroad; but though he works with the single-minded dedication of a tycoon, he does not receive a tycoon's salary. We still need our double income if we are to continue our present way of life.

During the years I worked a five-day-week, often well into the evening, we caught up with the shopping and the housework at the weekend and I wrote a column for a newspaper while my husband played golf. Books got written somehow, rooms got decorated, the garden weeded, and dinner-parties held. It was all possible while my husband had the energy to do his share, but not now. All his energy is reserved for work.

In a married partnership with a home to run, and with children who still see that home as the hub of the family, somebody has to have time for the domestic side of life and for keeping the wider family relationships in good repair.

Yet my job also needed my full commitment. I enjoyed it,

guilty about not being able to be so generous in giving handouts to our impetuous student children. As for myself, I have been used to buying what I need when I need it, and it is a hard habit to break.

If you don't work you don't earn. I was made uneasily aware that for three months my routine household expenses outstripped my earnings. My husband will always come to the rescue, of course, but that does not ease the guilt. All those wives who are going back to work as their children go to school are doubtless thinking, as I did, that things can only get easier as their children grow up. Through their thirties and forties they will juggle with all the bills they must keep in the air, looking forward to the time when their children are independent.

But unless they have exceptional energy, or the couple's joint income is enough to buy the help they need to keep their domestic life running, many might find as I have done that, once past 50, some of those balls start dropping round their ears.

There's the rub. I am now assailed by fresh guilt. I have exchanged all the working-wife tensions about playing fair both by the family and by my various employers for a guilty feeling that I have opted out. I also feel

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THE TIMES

SATURDAY

The weekend starts here

In domestic bliss

Cleaning lady, gardener, nanny, au pair - call them what you will, the age of the "domestic" is still with us. But the relationship has changed. Auberon Wangh, who remembers his family in the 1940s employing a staff of nine, reflects on the guilt complexes and culture clash of employing domestic help in 1986

Living on another plane
Douglas Adams, hitch-hiking on

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Westland: Peter Hennessy considers Mrs Thatcher's Cabinet style; David Watt on the long-term legacy

THE TIMES DIARY

Grace and disfavour

York House, the St James's home of the Duke and Duchess of Kent, is unfit for human habitation - or at least unfit for royal habitation. As a result, the Kents are homeless, and when they return from their winter break to London next week they will lodge with the Duke's aunt, the Queen Mother, in Clarence House until temporary accommodation is fixed up for them in St James's Palace. Yesterday the Property Services Agency of the DoE said: "Parapet repairs were put in abeyance when it was discovered that further work was needed. It will start next month and cost £175,000." The Duke's office tells me the work will take six months.

Tie-in

The new Defence Secretary, George Younger, sported an ostentatious broad-striped tie for his first press briefing yesterday. Was it, a reporter asked, an old regimental tie? No, replied Younger, delighted that it had been noticed. "It is in fact the same tie that the head of the Ministry of Defence wears in all James Bond films." Did that mean he was going to be M, asked another reporter? "No, no - M's number one," replied Younger complacently. He denied being offered the job prior to Heseltine's resignation yesterday. Either he had won the tie purely by chance - or he had been keeping it beside him just in case.

Mistimed

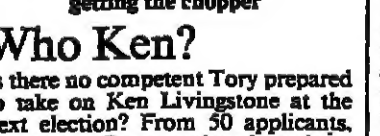
Julian Critchley must be enjoying some Schadenfreude from the Heseltine affair: it was Heseltine, a chum from Shrewsbury and Oxford days, who sacked him from the editorship of *Town* magazine in the early 1960s. Critchley may even make a few bucks out of the resignation if he rushes forward completion of his biography of Heseltine. One problem, however: Critchley yesterday was out sunning himself on a Caribbean cruise. Meanwhile, Old Salopians are ruefully recalling that another of their number is Westland's boss, Sir John Cuckney.

● Mrs Thatcher has changed her tune: Younger, sacked by Mrs T as defence spokesman during the Tory opposition years in the Seventies and replaced by Sir Ian Gilmour, sacked as Lord Privy Seal in 1981 for wetness.

Heseltate

Heseltine's departure has ruffled feathers at the Institute of Directors which had just listed him, along with Princess Anne, as a chief speaker at its convention in the Albert Hall next month. Hurried spokeswoman said: "As far as we are concerned, we are still expecting him as a backbench MP... he might have a lot to contribute." An hour later, the IoD was less sure. Another statement said: "At this moment he has not withdrawn his acceptance. We are still considering the situation."

BARRY FANTONI



"It was either that or getting the chopper"

Who Ken?
Is there no competent Tory prepared to take on Ken Livingstone at the next election? From 50 applicants, Brent East Conservatives have been unable to find a candidate of sufficient calibre to stand against him and plan to re-advertise. This time they expect a much better response. With Reg Frevson, the sitting MP ousted by Livingstone as the Labour candidate, now apparently ready to stand against him as an independent, there will doubtless be many opportunists who see the chance of Tory victory by default in this hitherto hopeless seat.

Nuked

W. H. Smith may soon be scrapping its "nuclear debate" section after the recent allegations - reported in this column - of a pro-unilateralist bias in its choice of books. Research by a retired teacher, W. R. Smith (no relation), showed that of 55 titles on the shelves, no fewer than 46 supported CND arguments - even though there are 170 books on the market with no CND slant. Smith's managing director, Malcolm Field, replied by saying that the cheaper, more marketable, books on the subject are mostly neutral or CND and that the publisher's line has made little effort to push them. Nevertheless, he admits that 25 titles bought by the firm during the CND-backed National Peace Book Week did not sell and will be sent back. "It is now open to some doubt whether the nuclear debate merits a separate section in our book departments," he said.

PHS

Why Heseltine finally snapped

The setting is Liverpool; the date, some time in 1982: the focus of attention, Michael Heseltine, Secretary of State for the Environment and Minister for Merseyside, on one of his regular Monday visits to his blighted bailiwick. He is carefully fending off questions about a meeting of ministers at Number Ten when the recommendations of the minute to Mrs Thatcher, *It Took A Riot*, was unspooled by her hard men. "Michael," said a sympathetic journalist, "I sometimes wonder how you manage to sit it out in that Cabinet." The Minister for Merseyside said nothing but raised his eyes heavenward and smiled.

Four years later he snapped. Mrs Thatcher, not known for her own delicacy in handling Cabinet conventions, had just invented a new one, custom-designed for her defence secretary: no more statements on Westland unless they had been approved by the Cabinet Office.

The first cliché imbibed by the student of British government is that unlike many other Western nations we have no written constitution; that ours is a piece of putty shaped by what Parliament, ministers and the courts impress upon it. It is not strictly true. Cabinet government does have a written constitution. It is called *Questions of Procedure for Ministers*. It is classified "Confidential", naturally, and is placed in the palms of every tyro minister by his private office. The guidelines consist of some 100 paragraphs of dos and don'ts, mainly don'ts. It binds ministers hand and foot, depriving them, in individual political terms, of their civil rights.

Since the meeting of EA, the Prime Minister's Cabinet committee on economic strategy, on December 9, Heseltine has succeeded in making the decision to let Westland seek succour from whom it may look distinctly "less authoritative than others". He himself has not ceased to "press for its review" by the full Cabinet - pressure which eventually brought about his downfall.

Although Mrs Thatcher is hardly the person to play the traditionalist

In the Cabinet room yesterday, Mrs Thatcher did not need to promulgate a new paragraph. For example, she might have reminded Heseltine of the section in *Questions of Procedure* dealing with collective responsibility which reads as follows:

"Decisions reached by the Cabinet or Cabinet committees are normally announced and defended by the minister concerned as his own decisions. There may be rare occasions when it is desirable to emphasise the importance of some decisions by stating specifically that it is the decision of Her Majesty's government. This, however, should be the exception rather than the rule. The growth of any general practice whereby decisions of the Cabinet or of Cabinet committees were announced as such would lead to the embarrassment of the government as a whole and would be regarded as less authoritative than others. Critics of a decision reached by a particular committee could press for its review by some other committee or by the Cabinet, and the constitutional right of individual ministers to speak in the name of the government as a whole would be impaired."

Since the meeting of EA, the Prime Minister's Cabinet committee on economic strategy, on December 9, Heseltine has succeeded in making the decision to let Westland seek succour from whom it may look distinctly "less authoritative than others". He himself has not ceased to "press for its review" by the full Cabinet - pressure which eventually brought about his downfall.

Although Mrs Thatcher is hardly the person to play the traditionalist

in matters of cabinet government it would be an exaggeration to say that she had so hammered the conventions that we now have full-blooded prime ministerial rather than collective cabinet government - that, as one seasoned insider put it, "We have a form of presidential government in which she operates like a sovereign in her court."

But Mrs Thatcher has refashioned the practice of cabinet government to reflect her dislike of collectivism in all its forms. And, typically, she did warn us. Three months before becoming Prime Minister she told Kenneth Harris: "It must be a conviction government. As Prime Minister I could not waste time having any internal arguments."

The record is eloquent on the question, reflecting her passion both for economy and a commanding style of leadership. Cabinet meetings are down to between 40 and 45 a year (about half the annual total of the 1950s). The number of cabinet papers submitted by ministers for collective discussion is between 60 and 70 a year, one-sixth of the flow in the 1950s.

She has kept her Cabinet committee structure very lean, too. She prefers informal ad hoc sessions at Number Ten with a departmental minister and his team defending a paper they have prepared for her, not the Cabinet against Mrs Thatcher and her team. When the full Cabinet is permitted to discuss an issue, she lets it be known at the outset what she thinks and it is up to the others to talk her out of it if they can.

Heseltine is not alone in disliking

this adaptation of cabinet government. David Howell, sacked as transport secretary after the last general election, said in an interview last year: "Of course there is a deterrent effect if one knows that one's going to go into a discussion not where various points of view will be weighed and gradually a view may be achieved, but into a huge argument where tremendous battle lines will be drawn up and everyone who doesn't fall into line will be hit on the head."

In his complaints about the omission of his protest from Cabinet minutes, Heseltine has highlighted the power vested in the Cabinet Secretary, who controls the record of what was said. Although these tensions have been revealed before - most notably by Richard Crossman from inside Harold Wilson's first cabinet - past practice has been different. Cabinet papers available under the 30-year rule show that when ministerial resignations seemed possible, the cabinet secretariat took unusually full minutes of the more difficult discussions.

Heseltine is now free to voice his lament for cabinet government publicly. Nye Bevan once said: "There are only two ways of getting into the cabinet. One way is to crawl up the staircase of preference on your belly, the other way is to kick them in the teeth." Heseltine, unlike some around the table, is not, and never has been, a staircase man.

The author is a Visiting Fellow at the Policy Studies Institute. His book, *Cabinet*, will be published by Blackwell in June.

Issues still to be faced

Although it has led to the spectacular resignation of a senior minister, the Westland helicopter row is intrinsically rather unimportant. Helicopters are a useful slice of defence research, but Britain is not going to be left in a state of helpless vulnerability if there is no independent British company capable of making them.

The long-term economic and technological stakes in this particular industry are not all that high, either. Compared with the question of the Strategic Defence Initiative, which really does raise fundamental issues but about which there has been infinitely less public debate, Westland is a very small sideshow.

And yet, for better or worse, it has become a symbolic test case involving not just the standing and careers of Messrs Leon Brittan and Michael Heseltine but three of the most important and emotive issues of contemporary British politics: Europeanism, versus the Atlantic "special relationship", cabinet versus prime ministerial government, government intervention versus the free market. We have been watching a genuinely high drama - and the fact that at least part of the outcome will rest with the Westland shareholders, a group of people who are largely uninterested in the wider implications, only adds to the dramatic irony.

Amid all the speculation about Heseltine's calculating reasons for raising the stakes in the Westland case to such enormous heights, one motive, more altruistic, has usually been omitted, namely his real commitment to a European defence identity. He has for some years been an instinctive "European", after the rather bombastic nationalism that used to be his youthful political stock in trade. Some of this is still retained in his suspicion of American domination but is now combined with a modernist's enthusiasm for the economic and technological potential of the European market.

Since he became Defence Secretary he cultivated his European counterparts and signally failed to hit it off with Caspar Weinberger, the American defence secretary. More important, he actively backed all sorts of European initiatives in his field, including the European policy group within Nato, the revival of the Western European Union, and the European fighter aircraft. He was initially reluctant and sceptical about British participation in President Reagan's Star Wars "bonanza", and the fact that he was outmanoeuvred by the Prime Minister and obliged to toe her line on that issue probably fuelled his determination in this case.

What has been arrayed against him was not so much a definite anti-European sentiment in Whitehall, although there are pockets of that in the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and in the Treasury, or even prime ministerial devotion to Reagan, but two other ingrained tendencies of the present British establishment. These are a weary and not entirely justified belief that any cooperative venture with the Europeans is bound to involve endless argument and frustration, and a deep reluctance to admit that real political choices ever have to be made by the British, as between Europe and America.

The first of these doubtless lies at the bottom of Sir John Cuckney's mind; the second has been imbedded in nearly all parts of Whitehall and in Downing Street (except

during Edward Heath's tenure) for 25 years, and reinforces the government's ingrained desire to allow purely commercial considerations to hold sway.

Heseltine probably overplayed his hand in taking on Mrs Thatcher the way did. There is no doubt that he has touched a very raw nerve by raising the issue of prime ministerial power. This is why it was so difficult for the Prime Minister to shut him up. It has been virtually impossible to talk to any minister or senior official outside the Cabinet Office for many months without hearing another tale of woe - about prime ministerial high-handedness, about Downing Street interference in detailed departmental matters and about the manipulative use of cabinet committees to end ad hoc working groups - to ensure that decisions are taken in accordance with Mrs Thatcher's wishes.

All these complaints have been heard under most prime ministers since Lloyd George but never so loudly in a time of peace as they are today. Irritation within some parts of the Cabinet is now frothing over in this affair. Because other Conservatives have seen the problem developing over a long period they are not disposed to be nearly as outraged by Heseltine's resignation, or as protective of Mrs Thatcher, as they would have been a couple of years ago.

One of the obvious mysteries of this fracas lies in the role of Leon Brittan. Anyone can see that he and Heseltine were never made to be bosom friends, but why did he come so strongly on the "non-interventionist" (Sikorsky) side? After all, his department, the DTI, has an interest in creating a European arms market, and in fostering European technology. He himself had been against the Star Wars deal on similar grounds.

The answer seems to lie partly in a purist determination that government purchasing power does not justify intervention in a company's commercial judgement. It also lies in a strong suspicion that Heseltine's dream of a rationalized European arms industry would actually cost the British taxpayer a great deal of money in government-subsidised research and development before it could be replaced, and that the game is not worth the candle.

By stating the issues in these rather general terms I don't want to imply that Heseltine is a paladin, unswayed by any taint of self-interest or calculation. On the contrary, he is by nature a very ambitious and experienced publicist on his own behalf. But that only makes his recent behaviour more interesting. He has been taking some very uncharacteristic gambles and one senses behind them, for once, an overriding emotional compulsion that goes beyond self-interest.

The odds have been stacked too heavily against him to win this particular fight and there is a strong probability that he has damaged himself permanently in the process. But by dramatising the big issues he may have shifted opinion in Whitehall, in his own party and in the country.

After this episode certain realities assume a more definite outline - the ideology of protecting a hands-off policy towards industry, is an invariable principle, the practical limits of prime ministerial power and, most of all, the occasional necessity of groping out of our mid-Atlantic fog towards clearer decisions for the 21st century.

moreover... Miles Kington

TV's great chat compomerate

Chat shows and quiz programmes are often said to be the cheapest kind of television to put on. Not so; TV programmes about TV programmes are the cheapest of all, involving only one man and a few clips or the odd viewer's letter. The other night I awoke from a strange nightmare, in which I dreamt I was watching an omnibus programme about TV called *Do They Mean Clive James's Points of View?* As far as I can remember, it went like this:

Ludovic Kennedy: Good evening, tonight I have with me a lecturer in Communications, called Raymond, who teaches at Stuart Hall, the young punk choreographer Chad Valley, and the late Gilbert Harding. This week we have been watching *Do They Mean Us? Clive James on Television and Points of View*. Voice: Biffney oh Reilly oh Jumping Jimmy Cricket... Barry Took... writes the Duke of Dorsetshire from Yorkshire. Voice: ...Where on earth does Ludovic Kennedy drag these hopeless pundits up from? I find it scandalous that I have to pay a £58 licence fee to watch these half-baked media nonentities being paid to talk about their own viewing. Why can't they write their complaints on to postcard and send them to you, Barry, like all of us other nonentities, and take their chance? Barry Took: Perhaps they do, you're Grace, perhaps they do. There are a lot of postcards here we never get around to reading! But one we did read was from Mrs Mills-Dyke of Yorkshire who says...

Voice: Dear *Points of View*, I was standing in a post office queue the other day for half an hour waiting for my TV licence, and got chatting to the Duke of Dorsetshire who was queuing in front of me. All we had to amuse us was a video set showing Post Office ads, and me and the show repeats of popular programmes like yours, at least we'd get our money's worth!

Barry Took: And why don't you send for your licence to Swansea like everyone else? But it's a good idea and I'll put it to Colonel Gaddafi, or whoever owns most shares in the Post Office.

Ludovic Kennedy: Raymond? What did you think of the programme? Raymond: I think the Duke's quite right. I can't imagine why anyone pays me to spout my half-baked ideas. But since you ask... Ludovic Kennedy: Good evening, tonight I have with me a lecturer in Communications, called Raymond, who teaches at Stuart Hall, the young punk choreographer Chad Valley, and the late Gilbert Harding. This week we have been watching *Do They Mean Us? Clive James on Television and Points of View*. Voice: Biffney oh Reilly oh Jumping Jimmy Cricket... Barry Took... writes the Duke of Dorsetshire from Yorkshire. Voice: ...Where on earth does Ludovic Kennedy drag these hopeless pundits up from? I find it scandalous that I have to pay a £58 licence fee to watch these half-baked media nonentities being paid to talk about their own viewing. Why can't they write their complaints on to postcard and send them to you, Barry, like all of us other nonentities, and take their chance? Barry Took: Perhaps they do, you're Grace, perhaps they do. There are a lot of postcards here we never get around to reading! But one we did read was from Mrs Mills-Dyke of Yorkshire who says...

Voice: Dear *Points of View*, I was standing in a post office queue the other day for half an hour waiting for my TV licence, and got chatting to the Duke of Dorsetshire who was queuing in front of me. All we had to amuse us was a video set showing Post Office ads, and me and the show repeats of popular programmes like yours, at least we'd get our money's worth!

Anne Owers makes a plea for 10,000 facing statelessness



For Hong Kong Chinese the offer of Peking citizenship - but not for the minorities

What will befall Hong Kong's dispossessed?

fathers who never married their Chinese mothers; some were prisoners of war during the Japanese occupation. Their lack of an effective nationality, their position as ethnic minorities and their past colonial role all combine to make them feel very vulnerable.

Official explanations have tried to veil the problem. It is claimed that the minorities have security in Hong Kong under the agreement with China. The latter has indeed generously permitted all non-Chinese aliens who have had the right to live in Hong Kong to retain that right. However, most non-British aliens will also have full citizenship status in another country, which would hold ultimate responsibility for them. China has made it clear that it regards the status of British Nationals (Overseas) merely as a temporary travel document facility.

It is also claimed that the British nationality proposals avoid statelessness. In one sense this is true: all British nationals will be given a British status after 1997, but that status will not carry any rights. Statelessness is not avoided by giving people names and passports: if it were that easy, there would be no stateless people in the world. Real statelessness is prevented by providing rights, responsibilities and

above all a place to belong. The distribution and proliferation of new titles is about as effective a remedy against statelessness as airlifting luncheon vouchers as a remedy against famine in Ethiopia.

Then there is the fear of immigration to Britain, the panic button which is pressed every time the rights of non-white British nationals are at issue. Hong Kong is depicted as a country full of Chinese people desperate to enter Britain. This is quite untrue. Hong Kong is a sophisticated trading country, the major financial centre of the Far East, and British people there do not wish to leave their homes or come to Britain. They merely want security to stay there at a time of unprecedented change.

The immigration argument invariably ignores the large number of people who already have rights to live in Britain: 200 million EEC nationals, about 10 million white South Africans, up to 9 million Commonwealth citizens with British-born parents or grandparents. All these potential immigrants are white: their right to enter or work is unchallenged and unthreatening.

The fourth and final veil held up by officialdom has just been torn down by the Hong Kong Legislative Council. It was argued that special

treatment for minorities would be racially divisive and would cause great resentment among the majority Chinese population. It is true that many Chinese British people in Hong Kong are angry at the progressive devaluation of their own British nationality. But the problem of the minorities is that they are caught between two racially discriminatory nationality laws, those of Britain and China. In a debate on the nationality proposals on December 4 last year, Hong Kong Legislative councillors, almost all of whom were of Chinese origin, unanimously urged the British Parliament to grant the minorities special treatment.

That request has had no response and has generated no publicity in Britain. The fears of other groups of British people such as the Protestants of Northern Ireland, anxious that the agreement with Dublin might make them "some sort of semi-British citizens" and the Falkland Islanders receive greater attention.

British minorities in Hong Kong are the victims of apathy and racial discrimination because, unlike the Falklanders and Gibraltarians who live in the only other British dependencies which cannot achieve independence, they will not be provided with a route to full British citizenship.

Britain's failure to take responsibility for ensuring that all British people in Hong Kong have an effective and secure nationality status is now creating insecurity for them and for Hong Kong; in the long term, the legacy of bitterness and mistrust which it has created could do even greater harm to Britain's own long-term interests.

The author is research and development officer for the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants.

Professor with the healing touch

Unlike some of his fellow countrymen, Professor Bolaji Akinyemi, Nigeria's minister of external affairs, has a soft spot for Britain. He did his doctorate in political science at Trinity College, Oxford, and then a couple of years ago went to St John's College, Cambridge, as an overseas scholar. He was about to return to Cambridge at the time of the Nigerian coup last autumn, but was asked by the new military leader, General Ibrahim Babangida, to become foreign minister. So sudden was the switch that he decided to leave his family in Cambridge, where his children were happily at school.

He has been particularly gratified, therefore, that his official visit to London this week has produced agreements that are expected to lead to the normalization of diplomatic relations between Britain and its former West African colony after a two-year hiatus. At last we are talking to each other again like two civilized people," he told me during a break in a heavy schedule of meetings with top people in government and finance.

Relations between Nigeria and Britain have been strained since each withdrew its high commissioner after the kidnapping in July 1984 of Umaru Dikko, a former

Nigerian minister, and the attempt to smuggle him back to Nigeria in a crate to face corruption charges. Although rejecting his request for political asylum, Britain refused to extradite him and Dikko is still living in London.

For the Nigerians the Dikko affair came to symbolize a broader set of resentments about the attitudes of their former imperial masters as well as a widely held belief that some British companies exploited Nigeria at the height of its oil boom. It is significant that the delicate issue of Johnson Matthey Bankers has been high on Akinyemi's agenda - the bank has claims totalling £100 million against Nigeria, although some are alleged to be fictitious.

The Nigerians also believe that Britain was deliberately unsympathetic over the economic problems the Nigeria faced when oil prices plunged. Many blame Britain, by far Nigeria's largest creditor, for its failure to reach an international agreement on rescheduling its £11.8 billion external debt.

Britain, along with Nigeria's other major creditors, had been insisting that any debt rescheduling should hinge on Lagos reaching an understanding with the International Monetary Fund on a £1.8 billion loan. The previous regime, led by

General Mohammed Buhari, had rejected the conditions which the IMF attached to its loan offer, and so, after months of public debate, has the present Nigerian government. Instead of accepting the IMF loan, President Babangida has introduced a set of budgetary reforms, including a cut in domestic petroleum subsidies, a pledge to introduce a "realistic" exchange rate for the naira and measures to boost agriculture, which together are intended to bring about the country's economic recovery.

It is this economic package, which in fact meets most of the conditions demanded by the IMF, that has enabled the two countries to move towards a restoration of full diplomatic relations.

Over the past three days Mrs Thatcher, Sir Geoffrey Howe, the Foreign Secretary, and Leon Brittan, Secretary for Trade and Industry, have all told Akinyemi that they approve the recovery programme - so much so, in fact, that Britain has offered to open talks on a new line of credit to Lagos.

"This offer is a major achievement," said Akinyemi. "It means that Britain is no longer insisting we accept the IMF loan before offering us new credit, and it will be a signal to our other creditors that Britain is

confident Nigeria is now back on stream."

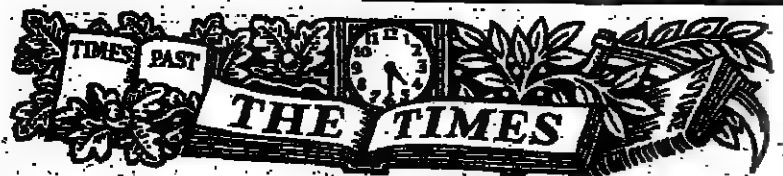
Akinyemi, a former director of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (Nigeria's equivalent of Chatham House), said improved Anglo-Nigerian relations will make it easier to deal with other differences that separate the two countries.

Top of the British list of complaints is the case of two British helicopter engineers, Angus Fawcett and Kenneth Clark, who were recently jailed for 14 years for helping to steal a small private aircraft from Lagos airport.

There was a widespread feeling in Britain that the severity of the sentences was politically motivated, in retaliation for Britain's refusal to give up Dikko and the 12-year sentence imposed by a British court on Major Mohammed Yusufu, one of Dikko's kidnappers.

"I assured Mrs Thatcher and Sir Geoffrey there was no relationship between the case of the two British engineers and Mr Dikko," Akinyemi said. "It is totally alien to President Babangida's nature to make these people scapegoats for what has happened in Nigeria."

Nicholas Ashford
Diplomatic Correspondent



P.O. Box 7, 200 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8EZ. Telephone: 01-837 1234

A VERY GOOD RESIGNATION

There are many senior Tories - in and out of the Cabinet - who must feel jealous at the manner of Mr Michael Heseltine's resignation yesterday. To have lost an argument, to have picked up one's papers and rushed out into Downing Street, to have delivered a statesmanlike apology to a televised press conference for the more faint-hearted ministers who have crossed swords with Mrs Thatcher since 1979, Mr Heseltine's example can only be a painful reminder of what might have been.

The immediate assessment of MPs yesterday was that the ex-Defence Secretary had harmed both the Government and his own future leadership prospects. The first is surely much more certain than the second. The man who waved the Commons mace, who led an accountants' crusade to Merseyside, whose position as the darling of the Conservative Party Conference is built on a once-a-year bout of rhetoric, needs no lessons in the political advantage of the grand gesture.

Has he always been open to criticism along the lines of "ought the finger that gripped the mace to be allowed near the nuclear button?" but by and large his gestures have served him well. They have become better planned too. We must accept his assurance that work on the lengthy statement which he delivered at four o'clock yesterday was not begun until after he had left the Cabinet room. But it is hard to believe - and not even creditable to his case - that he went into yesterday's Cabinet meeting without knowing pretty much the manner in which he was prepared to leave it.

Has he judged his tactics correctly? As far as the matter of Westland Helicopters is concerned the answer must be yes. There are four days to the extraordinary shareholders'

meeting that will direct the company's future. If he had saved his resignation until after the Sikorsky-Fiat bid, had been accepted it would have looked like pique. If his European allies had won their adjournment he would have lost cause to resign.

He now has the time, freedom, and privileged information with which to fight the European campaign in which he so passionately believes. His cool performance at yesterday's press conference suggests that he may sway many an uncommitted shareholder in the days to come. The manner in which he denies personal ambition is likely to be persuasive to many whose relations with their stockbroker is closer than it is with their local MP.

If the Europeans eventually emerge victorious his position on the back benches will be bolstered by the support of very many in the Defence and Industry lobby of Tory MPs who have seen their own champion fight his corner and win. If the Sikorsky-Fiat bid wins he will still be seen as a doughty champion.

The danger will come when the Westland affair is over. As other former Cabinet members have found, today's leading man can easily become tomorrow's spear-carrier. The back benches are not the natural place for Mr Heseltine to thrive. He can make neither the big gestures (no more Posing, no more Merseyside), nor fill his time in departmental management (no more romanticising the cult of efficiency). He will be left with what he does worse, and Mr Peter Walker does best, the gentle massaging of parliamentary alliances in the bars and tea rooms of Westminster.

With this prospect in view, it may seem to have been rash for Mr Heseltine to have launched quite such an outspoken attack on the Prime Minister yesterday.

It is a dubious cliché that the Tory party does not like disloyalty. What it certainly does not like is excessive disloyalty. To say that hers is "no proper way to run a Government", to attack the ill temper of her Cabinet committees, to accuse her of virtual duplicity in pretending to possess an even-handed attitude to Westland's future when she had no such thing; these charges were tougher than his supporters were expecting and, indeed, than they might have liked.

His choice of ground was, however, characteristically good. Westland will be a passing political fancy. European armaments procurement is not the populist issue that is going to grip the Conservative Party by its throat. But Mrs Thatcher's style of government is a subject of widespread concern among Conservatives at Westminster. Over the years even her closest supporters have complained of her intolerance in debate to which Mr Heseltine's statement makes such detailed and damaging reference.

The actual casus belli - the Cabinet's acceptance of a scheme for clearing members' statements on an inter-departmental issue - is not unprecedented. But by stressing the fact that it would not allow him to make statements or answer questions on matters which he had already raised he has skillfully cast Mrs Thatcher in the light of censor rather than information co-ordinator.

The Prime Minister's mode of Government was more widely tolerable when her administration had a sense of urgency to control the unions, to bring down inflation, to win the Falklands war. It is less acceptable if the momentum is seen to be slowing down. It is an issue which will last. It is an issue to which Mr Heseltine has been clever to link to his future.

SERVICE AND TRAINING

During her term of office, Mrs Thatcher has presided over one of the swiftest and most spectacular peace-time extensions of the State. Its agent has been the Manpower Services Commission: its programme the Youth Training Scheme. Government has made youth its business by virtually raising the age of compulsory education and training to 18 for large numbers of the population.

Youth training has had little to do with ideology. Faced with the growing scale of youth joblessness and the evident unpreparedness of 16-year-olds for the labour market, ministers have acted. To justify their large expenditures they could call to their aid arguments from economics and demography about the need to delay entry to the job market while a bulging age cohort passes through adolescence.

There are arguments for sociology, too, and from the crime statistics that it is better to keep a pair of young hands gainfully occupied than idle and prone to theft or violence. However it is justified, YTS exists, and however much progress is made in lowering the costs of youth labour and freeing up the job market at its junior end, improved youth training will continue to be a central concern of Government. The question is: is that all Government should be doing for youth?

Advocates from several sides of politics have recently come together on the common ground of extending the Government's concern with youth into some sort of programme of national service. The very phrase excites those who see in a period of compulsory service at arms a recipe for better defence.

National service, of some kind, has also attracted those who tend to talk loosely about youthful "alienation". Behind both stands the evidence of opinion polls which show that young and old alike might welcome some period of youthful service, military or civil, for the common good. There is a half-articulated belief, strongest among those of an age to have experienced the drills and routines of compulsory service in the military, that what matters most is not the content of a period of national service but the very fact of a common experience for a generation, serving to bind together classes and conditions in a society with a diminishing stock of common culture.

Like so many emanations from the Social Democrats, yesterday's paper on a scheme for national service through the voluntary social service organizations correctly identifies an area where Government might act imaginatively, but then fails the practical test. The party's papers reek of desk-top Fabianism, of plans drawn up by ivory tower committees which if they were ever to be applied in the real world of trade unions, self-interested professionals, stolid bureaucrats and criminal inner-city youth would result in a squandering of public money. The Social Democrats sit on the fence. They dislike the notion of a full-blooded scheme of military or civil conscription for 18-year-olds, but they are also too statist merely to want a thousand local schemes of voluntary work to flourish in untidy profusion.

Instead they opt for a central quango doling out pots of money to local projects over which it could exercise no proper super-

vision unless, like the MSC, it were prepared to countenance both a large bureaucracy and the potential loss of sums in wasteful schemes.

The leader of the SDP committee which produced this plan is Ms Sue Slipman, a lady whose smooth and speedy translation from the central committee of the Communist Party to that of the SDP amazed even connoisseurs of political apostasy. Ms Slipman has been a trade union official. The document therefore bows to the municipal difficulties in recruiting volunteer young people to social services which are heavily unionized: it is difficult to see the National Union of Public Employees endorsing a scheme for using young people as home helps or auxiliary kitchen hands.

That there are people, some old, some in ill health, some incapacitated, who need assistance in forms other than cash is unquestionable. There are potential young volunteers - not necessarily unemployed - with energy and time. What needs hard thought is how to link them. In Britain, sadly but inevitably, national agencies tend to dictate national standards which employ bureaucrats antipathetic to the voluntary spirit. Innovation in public policy will entail some scheme by which central Government can better motivate and assist, without smothering or nannying, the myriad of local groups which alone can intimately link the needy and the helpers. The SDP's is not that scheme. Yet once again, with the freedom given by the party's distance from power, it has provided outlines for others - including government ministers - to challenge and fill in.

Underwater music?

From Mr Peter Beazley, MEP for Bedfordshire South (European Democrat (Conservative))

Sir, As the Vienna New Year Concert reminded us, not only did Verdi write *Aida* to celebrate the opening of the Suez Canal some 120 years ago but Johann Strauss was sufficiently enthused by it to write a very nice piece for it, too!

Would it not be an appropriate gesture for the winner of the Channel fixed-link contract to sponsor a competition for the opening of the Channel link to be celebrated in a suitable artistic manner?

This Channel fixed link will be the first new structural enterprise linking member states to be undertaken since the formation of the European Community. It will furthermore be the most striking representation of the European Community to the ordinary everyday European citizen. I say European because the Germans, the Dutch, the Belgians, the Spanish and citizens of all member states will use it as much as the British and French.

We may further hope that in 120 years' time the pieces of music and

other cultural representations will recall to our successors in as happy and vivid a style the opportunities opened up by the Channel fixed link as did Johann Strauss's music in today's concert remind us of the great benefits provided by the Suez Canal in the 19th century.

Prosit Neujahr 1986! Vivat Europa!
Yours faithfully,
PETER BEAZLEY,
Hotel im Palais Schwarzenberg,
Schwarzenbergplatz 9,
A-1030 Vienna,
Austria,
January 1.

Putting one's back up

From Mr Gavin Ewart
Sir, My wife works in a primary school. She reports that some of the female staff (not, usually, the teachers - although a few are not above saying "He was sat there") are fond of the expression, "He did it off his own bat", meaning of his

own accord and without help from anybody else; as a batsman might himself score all the runs needed to win a match.

How widespread is this debased usage? Have any of your other readers encountered it?

GAVIN EWART,
57 Kenilworth Court,
Lower Richmond Road, SW15,
January 2.

Sporting firsts

From Mr I. Adam-Hill
Sir, In spite of the numerous references to sport found in the Bible (Sporting Diary, December 28 and Mr Fritz Spieg, January 6) Psalm 147, verse 10, "He hath no pleasure in the strength of an horse: neither delighteth he in any man's legs" (Oxford Psalter) makes it quite clear that the Almighty's taste in sport is not as catholic as one might have expected.
Yours faithfully,
IEUAN ADAM-HILL,
18 Queen's Avenue,
Dorchester,
Dorset,
January 1.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A new safeguard for environment

From the Vice-President of the Social Democratic Party

Sir, Those of us who recall the frequent changes made to the central organisation of government by Mr Harold Wilson and Mr Heath in the 1960s and 1970s are wary of further change. It is too easy for a prime minister to alter the structure of existing Whitehall departments or invent new ones in order to avoid policy choices, to resolve personal differences between ministers or for cosmetic reasons.

But the continuing clash you describe (leading article, January 8) between Mr Michael Jopling and Mr William Waldegrave arises from an issue of substance. Mr Jopling is a Cabinet minister with appropriate responsibility, both within the Cabinet and to Parliament. Mr Waldegrave is a junior member of Mr Baker's team at the Department of the Environment, where in practice local government and housing are the dominant matters.

But, as you say in your leading article, the environment has become a major issue of public concern, whether in relation to inner cities, the green belt or the protection of the countryside. To the question, "How much greenery can Britain afford?", the answer is simply, "More".

In these circumstances, there is everything to be said for the creation of a new Department of Environmental Protection, responsible for planning, conservation, pollution control, leisure and recreation and for promoting environmental policies throughout government. This would ensure for the first time a secretary of state in Cabinet with an effective voice for the environment and no other departmental distractions.

It is not for me to advise Mrs Thatcher to adopt such a course, but it would be one followed by the Alliance government.

Yours faithfully,
WILLIAM RODGERS,
Vice-President,
Social Democratic Party,
48 Patchell Road, NW5,
January 8.

From Mr Richard Crabtree
Sir, In your editorial today you deal with the conflict between environmental and agricultural considerations, and conclude by declaring that "it is the Government as a whole, holding the economic weal of the nation as its first goal, that will have to decide how much greenery Britain can afford".

I would have thought that if the social history of this country over the last century had taught us

nothing else it had amply demonstrated that material wealth, however evenly distributed, is not an entirely satisfactory end in the pursuit of human contentment.

In describing the economic weal of the nation as the Government's first goal you perpetuate a fallacy which is, I suspect, becoming more and more apparent in a society which has acquired the habit of greeting what is given with cries for more.

Might I correct your error by suggesting that the important question is not how much greenery Britain can afford, but how much more greenery we can afford to lose.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD CRABTREE,
3 Temple Gardens,
Temple, EC4,
January 8.

From Mr Richard Booth

Sir, Your columns are frequently full of academics complaining about cutbacks. Theoretically this would possibly lead to a revival of rural areas as their decline has often been ascribed to a brain drain.

With a university degree there is virtually no suitable employment for a graduate in the kind of small Welsh border town I live in (population approx. 2,000). With lower expectations they may become more usable members of the community rather than competing fruitlessly for highly paid positions in the bureaucracy of big government or big business.

We do not in rural areas especially mind the brain drain (a good gardener is actually more valuable to us than a soil scientist), but we have a horror of the university graduate who comes back to help us - tourist boards, forestry commissions, national parks, development agencies, water boards. The tip for survival in a rural area (of which I have never heard a word of disapproval from a true countryman) is, never trust anybody who produces a brochure!

How much further will the beautiful land of Britain be violated before we accept the elementary common sense that our quality of life depends on the manual workers? Unclear ditches, gates off their hinges, hazardous barbed-wire fences, what Wales needs is an army of the uneducated!

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD BOOTH, Director,
Richard Booth Hay Castle Limited,
The Castle,
Hay-on-Wye,
Hereford,
January 3.

Westland's future

From Sir Fred Catherwood, MEP for Cambridge and North Bedfordshire (European Democrat (Conservative))

Sir, When I was managing director of an Anglo-American company some time ago, I asked for full access to the American parent company's research. I was refused because "our business depends on our major American customers and our newest technology goes to them first to keep them ahead of their own competition".

Several years later, as director general of "Neddy" (National Economic Development Office) I wanted, against the will of the company, applications for EEC membership, to explore the possibility of a north Atlantic free trade area.

I was discouraged by two successive foreign secretaries on the grounds that partnership within Europe was a partnership among equals, whereas in an American partnership we would be completely dominated by the Americans.

Yours faithfully,
FRED CATHERWOOD,
Shire Hall,
Cambridge,
January 8.

From Lord Balfour of Inchrye

Sir, Political bidding in millions will not answer one main question. How can the British Forces obtain the helicopter most suitable to their needs?

Is it from a hastily thrown together European consortium of proper portrait (the three-quarter front view). The comparison is evident in the two definitive issues of the series, that which used the Dorothy Wilding photographic proper portrait in 1953 and that which was based on Arnold Machin's sculptured bas-relief profile portrait, which is still in use.

Mr Hetherington's hankering after the emblematic design approach, complete with typographical embellishment, applied to both definitive and commemorative issues, suggests that there is still public unease towards a realistically illustrative "cigarette card" solution.

Yours faithfully,
STUART ROSE,
Walpole House,
East Street,
Coggeshall,
Essex,
January 7.

Famine in Africa

From the Director of Voluntary Service Overseas and others

Sir, Tragically 1985 had to be a year of relief in Africa, but it is essential that the New Year should bring the beginning of the long process of recovery and reform.

It would be sad if, after a year of supreme effort in the face of the sub-Saharan famine, the governments and peoples of the rich, industrialised countries turned away their attention.

Though it is true the immediate emergency has receded and the number at risk nearly halved, there are still many areas where emergency food will have to be provided.

Recovery from a disaster on this scale does not come quickly. The

parties who have not hitherto worked closely together on helicopter development and production?

Is it from a consortium that has no central design and research staff? Is it from a consortium that has no central manufacturing plant?

Is it from a consortium that has no agreed programme as to who will do what?

Is it from a consortium that has no central administrative organisation? The European proposed consortium must be compared in prospect with Sikorsky, which is the most important and biggest helicopter corporation in the world. At Hartford, Connecticut, they have a completely modern set-up, from research through design, development and production, all of which will go into the pool to the benefit of the Westland-Sikorsky efforts.

It is the Sikorsky products which British Airways, on their scheduled services and to the North Sea rigs, rely on. Relations between the companies have always been close in technical matters, which inevitably will be to the benefit of both parties.

Sikorsky must have future designs in mind and these could well answer the question I asked at the beginning of this letter.

Yours faithfully,
RALFOUR OF INCHRYE
(Former Chairman, British European Airways Helicopters Limited),
End House,
15 St Mary Abbot's Place,
Kensington, W8,
January 8.

Royal imprint

From Mr Stuart Rose

Sir, Mr Hetherington's preference (January 3) for "portraits" rather than silhouettes on UK postage stamps calls for some comment. Silhouettes of the Queen's portrait appear only on commemorative issues, mostly in monochrome, whereas the definitive issues carry a profile portrait in tone.

The design concept of a UK definitive stamp has by tradition, since 1840, been emblematic, not pictorial. Therefore the up-dating of the Sovereign's effigy, which is the dominant visual element, would turn the design from being an emblem into a pictorial representation.

Similarly, the profile or formal portrait is more appropriate as an emblem than is the more naturalistic

A case to concede on invalid care

From Sir David Price, MP for Eastleigh (Conservative)

Sir, In considering the merits of Mrs Jacqueline Drake's claim (report, January 9) that married women who give up work to care for a disabled relative should receive the invalid care allowance, I would remind you of the recommendation of the House of Commons Social Services Select Committee in our report on community care (February, 1985), in paragraph 146, we wrote: of equal concern is the exclusion of married women who are the most frequent carers for the mentally disabled from eligibility for invalid care allowance. We recommend the extension of invalid care allowance to married women as soon as resources are available.

Therefore, would it not be more fitting - and more gracious - for the Government to implement our recommendation now, rather than wait until they are compelled to do so by an adverse judgement in the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg?

Yours truly,
DAVID PRICE,
House of Commons.

Drink and driving

From Mr T. David

Sir, Your readers are well accustomed to the seasonal outburst of hysteria on the subject of drinking and driving. Reports in your issue of January 3 hint at even more draconian regulations and I therefore crave space to offer an alternative perspective.

Older readers will recall the annual hysteria which used to surround road deaths at Bank holidays. Ministers of Transport and others in the media would pontificate daily as the grim totals over Easter were reported. That particular hysteria went away overnight when it was realized that the Bank holiday figures were less than the normal daily average when commercial vehicles added to the carnage. Could it be that Christmas, too, sees fewer accidents than normal?

We would do well to re-examine the uniquely vague drink-drive law as it stands. It remains the only law where I, an occasional drinker, do not know when I have broken it. It is the only law which discriminates against those with a low body weight and therefore women. It is also one of the few laws allowing no effective defence in court and mandatory sentencing, which might explain its appeal to the police.

We should provide penalties and deterrent sentences in the case of those guilty of recognizable traffic offences. Whether the cause is intemperance, impatience or incompetence is not terribly relevant.

Yours faithfully,
T. DAVID,
55 Shaw Green Lane,
Prestbury,
Cheshire,
Gloucestershire.

From Major J. D. Summers

Sir, I wonder if much thought has been given by Parliament or the police authorities on the drink and drive problem for single people who live in the countryside, often elderly people, widows and widowers, who have no one with whom to share the driving. There is no public transport and country taxi drives are hugely expensive, far beyond their means.

An invitation to Christmas lunch or new year's party has to be refused or not enjoyed. A modest glass of sherry and two glasses of wine puts them in dire peril of losing all means of transport for a year and perhaps the necessity to sell their house and move to a town or large village where there is a shop.

These are not the drivers who kill or maim.
Yours sincerely,
DAVID SUMMERS,
Marsh Cottage,
Old Romney,
Romney Marsh, Kent,
January 3.

All contributions

From Mr Roy Hay

Sir, Authors are prone to grumble about their publishers and the sales of their books which has been panned with such high hopes.

So it is most heartening to learn that the Public Lending Right authority is really seriously looking after authors' interests. Both my wife, Frances Perry, and I have received communications from the PLR office entitled "PLR notification of titles 'found'".

These are titles they have discovered and which we did not register because we thought they were probably too old. But it appears they are still being borrowed from libraries and for which, hopefully we shall receive some payments under the PLR scheme, which, however small, will be gratefully received.

Yours sincerely,
ROY HAY,
Bulls Cross Cottage,
3 Bulls Cross,
Enfield, Middlesex,
January 2.



ON THIS DAY

JANUARY 10 1785

Ballooning began on June 15 1783 with the ascent at Annonay, near Lyons of a bag filled with smoke from a straw fire - the contrivance of the Montgolfier brothers. On November 21 the first manned free flight ascent in a balloon was made by Pilâtre de Rozier and the Marquis d'Arlandes. Although the Times failed to record the first cross Channel flight by Blanchard and Jeffries on January 7 1785 thereafter countless ascents and activities were reported in the paper in its foundation year.

[AN EARLY BALLOONIST]

Extract of a Letter from Birmingham, Jan 6

"On Tuesday morning last, though it rained incessantly and was remarkably hazy and foggy, the most numerous assembly of people of every denomination that ever was known appeared in this town to see Mr. Harper ascend with his balloon. The crowd for the Tennis Court was by far too great; and numbers of very respectable persons entered situations that on any other occasion would have been rejected about eleven o'clock the bell rung as an intimation that the balloon was filling which was completed by twelve. Twenty minutes after twelve the modest adventurer took his seat in a very increasing rain amidst the congratulations of the admiring spectators. Near a quarter of an hour was employed in making a proper equisite and in taking leave of some particular friends; when the silken cords that kept the machine from rising were loosened by the fair hands of two or three ladies, who did so with duty with apparent reluctance and the whole apparatus rose with the greatest majesty gratifying the most unbounded wishes by the sublimity of the spectacle. In less than five minutes the populace being in an adjacent field, our aerial traveller lowered himself amongst them, as if to take a friendly farewell; and having heaved out some salutes, he re-ascended with resplendent clarity whilst the sky resounded with the plaudits of the admiring multitude. In less than two minutes for the first six minutes the rain increased to an uncommon degree; but in four minutes more he shot above every cloud and enjoyed the vivifying influence of the most radiant sun and pure ether-making such observations as were dictated by the scientific. There, however, the compass was continually varying as the currents of air changed.

"The barometer at the time of his ascent stood at twenty-eight inches and three-eighths, which indicated a degree of rarity of the atmosphere not frequently known, which, together with the large quantity of water that had accumulated upon the balloon and its surrounding net, very considerably diminished the power of the ascent of the machine. The cold was by no means to be feared, the sky naturally having been expected as the thermometer at no time was lower than twenty-eight degrees on Fahrenheit's scale; at his ascent it stood at forty. He gradually descended for the space of thirty minutes, at which time he was elevated four thousand three hundred feet above the earth.

"In the progress of this aerial excursion, Mr. Harper experienced no other inconvenience than what might be expected in the change of climate, wet and sunshine, except a temporary dizziness.

"About two o'clock, he descended at Milton Green, near Newcastle, in Staffordshire, where he was met by this town. He arrived at Litchfield the same evening, spent, with his balloon and car; the latter of which, with some of his instruments, we learn with great concern were unfortunately injured by anchoring at Milton Green, notwithstanding the kind assistance of many people at that place; and yesterday he arrived and received the unbounded plaudits of the inhabitants, the populace having taken the horses from his carriage, and drove him in triumph through the principal streets.

"At Trentham, Mr. Harper indulged himself with a view of Lord Gower's; and seeing a person at some distance hailed him with his speaking trumpet, to know how he was from Birmingham? He was answered 'About 40 miles, Master, but you are going the wrong way'."

Born to blush unseen

From the Reverend Canon Michael Mayne

Sir, "But did anyone know a Kerenhappuch?" asks the Rev John Ticehurst (January 3).

Why, yes. In Canterbury, 40 years ago, where Dr Hewlett Johnson (the "Red Dean"), following the example of Job and delighted with the birth of two daughters in his old age, called them Keziah and Kerenhappuch (Job xlii, v. 14; in modern translations "Cassia" and "Masscara").

Unfortunately it was not easy for us boys to get to know them socially. Although the dean was chairman of governors, he had erected on his house a very large notice proclaiming "Christians ban nuclear weapons", and the Deanery was placed out of bounds sine die.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL MAYNE,
The University Church,
Canterbury.

From Mrs Kate Wedd

Sir, My husband regrets the omission from Mr Ticehurst's list of Victorian girls' names (January 3) the charming neo-classical name borne by all his mother's sisters - Eurante.

Yours faithfully,
KATE WEDD,
15 Elmdeale Road,
Bristol, Avon.

From Rabbi Jonathan A. Romain

Sir, As minister to a community that contains an Alexis, Hope and Yetta, and having recently rushed to tell the one Hiram that another of the same name had just moved into the area, may I point out that not all of John Ticehurst's list of names (January 3) have disappeared from 1850.

Yours faithfully,
JONATHAN A. ROMAIN,
Maidenhead Synagogue,
9 Boyn Hill Avenue,
Maidenhead,
Berkshire.

THE ARTS

Cinema

Attenborough shrewd enough to let well alone

A Chorus Line (PG)
Odeon Leicester Square

Year of the Dragon (18)
ABC Shaftesbury Avenue

Orion's Belt (15)
Classics Chelsea,
Tottenham Court Road

Peppermint Freedom (PG)
Metro 1

Kurosawa retrospective
Barbican

A Chorus Line is the longest-running and most profitable musical in the history of Broadway, with a worldwide gross estimated at more than \$300 million. It was inevitable that Hollywood should take it on, since the business of Hollywood has always been to buy success, regardless of how suitable a particular property is to the screen - which in the case of A Chorus Line is not very. This is a musical purposefully conceived for the stage. Moreover, the kind of overblown and transparent pretensions that go well enough on Broadway and in Drury Lane tend to be exposed on the screen. The chorus audition is portentously offered as a microcosm of all human life: Aspiration, Disappointment, Growing Up and Growing Old, Sex, Race, Religion, to whom are due a few moments of

love are all explored in turn, as each character does his self-psychoanalytical number.

In the decade since the film rights were sold, a number of potential directors gave up in face of the problems of adapting a musical so stage-orientated. Finally the project was taken on by Richard Attenborough, no doubt grateful for a chance to demonstrate that making imperial spectacles was not his only skill.

In the event he has been clever enough not to try to be clever. He has left the stage-show where he found it, on the stage, a few brief backstage excursions hardly amount to "opening up". The major change from the stage original, making a visible, nearly human character of the choreographer (Michael Douglas) instead of a disembodied voice, seems sensibly calculated to mitigate somewhat the awesome sense of a Last Judgement.

Much of the time Attenborough films a head-on, proscenium view, and when the performers seem equal to it, uses long unbroken takes in the vocal numbers. Mostly the performers are equal to it, because Attenborough is always adept at selecting his collaborators; and he has assembled a talented, attractive, no-star cast for the auditions.

Technically, too, nothing has been left to chance. Faye Poliak has devised some remarkably erotic practice costumes. Ralph Burns's arrangements beef up the Marvin Hamlisch music, as Jeffrey Hornaday's choreography refreshes the original conception of Michael Bennett. The most important contribution however comes from the gifted English editor, John Bloom (a regular Attenborough collaborator), to whom are due a few moments of

excitement achieved in the big dance numbers.

Michael Cimino made a promising debut with *Thunderbolt and Lightning*, but when his second film, *The Deer Hunter*, had the dubious luck of winning five Oscars (including Best Film and Best Director) he was inescapably landed in Hollywood's big money league. *The Deer Hunter* and the films which followed, *Heaven's Gate* and now *Year of the Dragon*, show Cimino consistently spending money and effort on big showpieces and painstaking visual detail, but apparently unable to control narrative or structure.

There is a lot of show in *Year of the Dragon* - a highly decorative, studio-built New York Chinatown, set-pieces that include an interminable Chinese funeral and an unnecessary trip to South-East Asia to create an over-populated Golden Triangle commune. The script however, even aside from its sprawling incoherence, seems a frail thing to support the massive superstructure. It is a familiar tale of the tough, incorruptible lone-wolf cop obsessively and single-handedly bent on busting a huge crime organization, despite the opposition of his politically-motivated superior, and despite the resulting wreck of his marriage. The script's more "serious" elements - little lessons in American-Chinese history and the cop's various hang-ups with racism, social resentment, Vietnam memories and a Polish immigrant background - seem artificially injected.

The cinematographer Alex Thompson keeps his cameras nervously on the move, exploring Cimino's sets and set-pieces. In the end though it is the nicely judged



Bugging the tongs: two elderly linguists come to the aid of Mickey Rourke in *Year of the Dragon*

opposition of the performances of Mickey Rourke and John Lone that keep the thing alive, at least until the plot gets too absurd.

Orion's Belt is Norway's *Defence of the Realm*, as an addition to the continuing cycle of films of political paranoia. It reflects less the current atmosphere of the Second Cold War than the permanent anxieties of those Scandinavian countries that belong to NATO while sitting, geographically speaking, on the doorstep of the Soviet Union.

The central characters are a cheerful trio of nautical vagabonds, up to any trick to turn a small profit with their rusty old boat. They think they have struck lucky when they find a mass of copper cable on an uninhabited island; but find too late it leads to a Soviet listening post. The Soviet military set out to silence them, and manage to sink their boat and kill two of the trio. The real

horror begins when the third man tries to tell his story to the Government, only to discover that Norway, as well as the Soviets, political interests demand that he be silenced.

The director Ola Solum has a keen sense of drama and suspense; he can make the disembarking of a bulldozer as gripping as the finely filmed helicopter attacks, and takes full advantage of the impressive Arctic scenery and fauna. This consistently well-played and handsomely-mounted adventure story is Norway's most expensive and most exportable film to date.

Marianne Rosenbaum's *Peppermint Freedom* (a deliberate mistranslation of the original German title, *Peppermint Frieden*) is a talented, tormented little film. Shot in black and white that enhances the skilful evocation of the period, it is a German child's

view of the first years of a peace which - with the Cold War, Korea and nuclear armament - seems more frightening than the war just ended. Much of the film is concerned with the nightmares of the imaginative Marianne (a marvellous first-time child actor, Saskia Tyroler); the surreal atmosphere explains the chronological oddity of the child's apparently unchanging age between Germany's Russian campaign and Korea.

London's outstanding cinema event is the retrospective of the work of Akira Kurosawa, presented in collaboration with the Japan Foundation as part of the Barbican Centre's Japanese Festival. Kurosawa must now rank as the greatest living and working film artist; and the two-week retrospective presents his entire work from his first film, *Sanshiro Sugata*, to his most recent, the monumental *Ran*, a Japanese

Leah, which will officially open in London in March. Only the trade union-produced propaganda film, *Those Who Make Tomorrow*, to which Kurosawa briefly contributed but which he subsequently repudiated adamantly, has been excluded. It is now even possible to see *Judo Saga II* (1945), for many years believed to be lost.

This picture was a sequel to Kurosawa's debut film, *Judo Saga* (*Sanshiro Sugata*, 1943), a major rediscovery of the present retrospective. The film was itself lost, and the negative was only restored and reconstructed in 1952. Lacunae in the action are now bridged by (needlessly) long titles; and at least one line of action vanishes halfway through the film. Even so we can recognize Kurosawa, in this very first work, as an artist not like the others.

David Robinson

Theatre

Superb adaptation

Les Liaisons dangereuses
The Pit

A second viewing of this piece - first seen in Stratford last September - confirms its place among those few dramatizations of novels that rank equal with their sources.

The word "faithful" is usually involved in this context, and for what it is worth, Christopher Hampton's text does faithfully deliver Choderlos de Laclos's story of how two arch-intellectuals conspire in the seductions of a married woman and a girl aged 15. Far more important is Hampton's success in digesting the book and recreating it in his own terms. If ever there were a case for claiming adaptation as a primary creative act, this is it.

Brief by the usual standards of eighteenth-century epistolary novels, *Les Liaisons dangereuses* still runs to some 400 pages; and, although practically every letter in the book manages to advance the plot, its pace is leisurely and digressive. In Hampton's version, with nothing essential omitted and only one crucial change in the

events, it has been wound up to the tension of a tightly coiled spring. Also, where Laclos's ingenuity went on keeping his characters apart so as to give them the pretext for writing, Hampton exerts corresponding skill in bringing them together - complete with episodes of eavesdropping and embarrassing discoveries.

This, in turn, entails the task of devising an appropriate idiom from a gracefully literary book - actually lacking in dialogue. Hampton's solution here is to opt for a timeless style in which phrases from the letters can combine with modern speech, to present - as in Laclos - the portrait of a highly formal society where any conspicuous scheming, or cold-blooded cruelty can flourish provided it is discussed in the most unspecifically civilized language.

In its original form, the story's central metaphor, of the assault on sexual virtue in terms of military campaigning, is strictly confined to the eighteenth century. Hampton's text releases it into wider currency without any loss in narrative excitement. Above all, it preserves the



Alan Rickman: born to play the part

that the Vicomte is simply her most effective instrument and her chief victim. At her behest, he seduces young Cecile (Lesley Manville making a virginal change from virgin ignorance to delighted corruption); again under her orders, he casts off his beloved Presidente de Tourvel - only to lose interest in life and die willingly in a duel. The irony, pressed to the limit in Howard Davies's production, is that the intriguer has himself been ambushed by his own lies.

Hampton's alteration is to reprove the Marquise from snailpox only to deliver her to the guillotine. However, the revolutionary rumblings that punctuated the Stratford production have been muted; and atmosphere is dictated mainly by Iona Sekacz's dissonant pastiche Couperin on an amplified harpsichord - which spreads the sense of poignant desolation, even under the most uproariously improper episodes, such as the sight of Valmont writing to his beloved on the back of a naked courtesan who, he later claims, "sometimes" does secretarial work for me.

Of Alan Rickman's Valmont, one can only say that he was born to play the part: in his repulsive voluptuousness, its weary exhaustion, and its bursts of brutish energy; never more spellbinding than in his sleepwalking advance on to Danceny's sword. Lindsay Duncan's Marquise, facing her adversaries and dupes with a level, challenging gaze and a mocking drawl, would exert steady authority even without the help of the Watteau silks she wears like a suit of armour. Juliet Stevenson cuts through the surrounding style, subterfuge, with direct feeling and unbearable pain.

Irving Wardle

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PLG Young Artists Purcell Room

At the mid-point of this year's Park Lane Group Young Artists and Twentieth Century Music series the remarkable standard of performance shows no sign of flagging. But of the three partnerships heard on Wednesday one was obviously outstanding and for a simple reason. The Lisney Piano Trio tackled two bold works, the Shostakovich and Ives Piano Trios, in a bold manner, proving that in music as in so much else he who dares often wins. Moreover it disturbed the violinist Rebecca Hirsch and the cellist Caroline Dearnley not one bit that their usual pianist, the unfortunate James Lisney, was indisposed. Nor should it have done when they were able to summon as substitute the talented John Lenehan.

Indeed, only in the first movement of the Shostakovich did one sometimes feel that a sharper response was required of him, although there was plenty of passion and bite to be heard from his colleagues. The fiery cut and thrust in the Scherzo was unanimous, however, while the sustained tragic expression of the Largo had admirable breadth as well as an instinctive sense of momentum. I liked, too, the wily minute rhythmic anticipations of the finale, which helped give it just the right degree of macabre grotesqueness.

If anything, the Ives was yet more impressive. The glorious cacophony of the movement Ives called "TSIAJ" ("This

Scherzo is a joke") sounded every bit as colourfully chaotic as its obvious close relative, the Scherzo of the Fourth Symphony, while the warm humility of the finale, full of Ives's wilfully wayward harmonic imprints, was here confident, and thus compelling and moving.

So, in this concert, the soprano Tracey Chadwell sang John McCabe's *Requiem Sequence* (1971) with rare accuracy, using her pure yet expressive voice and a commanding stage presence to

convey the mesmeric qualities of an exquisite, touching score. Her pianist, Pamela Lidiard, handled the work's Messianic-like textures sensitively, while both found equally appropriate colours for Elizabeth Maconchy's *Three Songs* (written expressly for Miss Chadwell) - two dark Auden settings in memory of W. B. Yeats and a satirical, appositely whimsical setting of Macneice's "It's no go". Bernard Rands's *Ballad III* for soprano and tape was delivered with the right sense of drama.

In the early evening recital

the clarinetist Duncan Prescott showed technical brilliance and an ability to call at will upon the widest extremes of his instrument's character, as was required in Piatux Rainer's *Suite*. A pity that his programme was otherwise slightly odd: York Bowen's *Sonata* is lovingly crafted but sounds like Brahms watered down by English pastoralism while Morris Per's *Luminas* (1972) had its effective moments but lasted too long. Scott Mitchell was the excellent pianist.

Stephen Pettitt

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FINANCE AND INDUSTRY

Executive Editor Kenneth Fleet

Another cheery start but will it last?

This time last year the ritual pre-Budget convocation of the Treasury team at Chevening began on a cheery note. After dinner on Saturday night, Ministers played claretades. Came the dawn, with conflicting newspaper stories about the state of the economy, and the Prime Minister's manifest concern. The Chancellor pressed the panic button and base rates shot up by 4½ points.

This weekend roughly the same team is assembling again at Chevening for a new year trol round the configuration of the March Budget. Judging by the tenor of the Chancellor's comments yesterday, the atmosphere will be equally cheery. Mr Lawson, on the "Today" programme, made it clear he thought the economy was doing very well.

Base rates, which went up one point yesterday to 12½ per cent, had occasionally to go up, just as now and then they came down. Industry should stop moaning since it now has a devaluation against the D-mark to play around with.

Looking at the jobless figures, workers only have themselves to blame for pricing themselves out of work. Wage policies were disastrous. Economic growth was steady, and inflation set on a declining trend.

But will the general weekend merriment grind to a halt yet again this year? Judging by yesterday's performance, money and bond markets are increasingly disenchanted by what they see as the Chancellor's narrowly sectarian interpretation of what is taking place in the economy.

Money market rates opened sharply higher and three-month interbank was offered at around 13½ per cent, almost presaging a further one point rise in base rates. The Bank of England moved into the money markets very sharply, and established a dealing range exactly one point higher than the Tuesday, pre-interest rate rise, intervention levels, at about 12½ per cent. This calmed the market, because it suggested the authorities did not wish to see rates any higher, at least for the time being.

But the gilt market fell apart again yesterday. Index-linked stocks for example dropped nearly a point during the worst of the heaving. More significantly, the long end of the market was particularly weak, suggesting in turn that holders of 21st century stocks have virtually given up expecting anything worthwhile in the shape of sustained falls in rates from the Chancellor. The way lies open, for a complete redrawing of the basic UK yield curve from its current downward sloping bias.

Not can the gilt market expect any help from New York. On Wednesday, bond prices fell by 1½ points on news that US non-farm payrolls rose by 320,000 in December. That means that the US economy is far stronger than bears like Dr Kaufman of Salomon Brothers had reckoned. In turn, this implies that the scope for cuts in the US Federal discount rate is virtually non-existent.

As the US Bond market continued its collapse yesterday, Dr Kaufman offered the "Times" a more or less complete recantation of his pre-Christmas views. He now does not see US rates moving lower until the pace of US economic growth moderates. Since he forecasts continued growth in US real Gross National Product until at least 1988, that means that US bond buyers will have to wait at least 24 months before the Federal Reserve decides to loosen the monetary strings.

In bond markets, that represents an eternal US yields ought now to rise sharply not least because New York was plague yesterday by rumours that the Arabs were poised to sell their entire dollar portfolio, as retaliation for President Reagan's sanctions against Libya.

Whether news of these violent swings in market sentiment succeeds in penetrating the walls of Chevening and alters the Treasury's benign view of the works remain to be seen. Perhaps, despite Egypt's oil price cut yesterday, the firmness of the US economy will communicate itself to the oil market, bailing the Chancellor out in the traditional way.

No referral and the Argylls march to war

The gloves are off in the bitter £1.9 billion Argyll-Distillers takeover fight. After unconvincing long deliberations, Mr Leon Brittan, the Trade and Industry Secretary, announced yesterday that he was going

along with the Office of Fair Trading's recommendation and would not be referring the bid to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. The battle for the hearts and minds of the Scotch whisky group's 94,000 shareholders now begins in earnest.

Mr Brittan's decision is a blow to Distillers, which was pinning considerable hope on the six-month breathing space that a Monopolies probe would have given its besieged directors.

Now they have until February 15 at the latest, the offer's 60th day, to convince their shareholders that they should be given a new lease of life.

The offer closes for a second time on January 28. The 39th day, after which Distillers is barred from releasing fresh financial details of its defence, is on January 25 and the 46th day, after which Argyl is not allowed to raise its offer except in the event of a counter bid, is on February 1.

Distillers was putting a brave face on Mr Brittan's decision yesterday, saying that its defence plans had been laid on the basis that there would be no reference. The main planks of the public defence will include forecast profits for the year to the end of March of not less than £300 million, against £236.2 million last time and a probable 20 per cent-plus rise in the dividend.

Distillers will also stress the diversification plans it is formulating to meet ambitious future growth targets. Despite impressive political support for a reference whipped up by GJW Government Relations, the political lobbying firm, there was never much of a case for a Monopolies investigation. The claim that Argyl is an unfit steward of the Scotch whisky industry because of its lack of experience in the international drinks market, had a jokiness about it in the light of Distillers' own poor record.

Nor, too, did the claim that the bid would overload the company with excessive debt cut much ice.

The audit watchdog threatens to bite

That faithful watchdog, the auditing profession, is threatening not just to bark but bite back at the Government's plans for the role of the auditors in regulating the financial services sector.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales revealed yesterday that the time has come to set the Government's mind straight about the distinction between what is theoretically desirable and what is actually practical. The institute acknowledges that the auditors' role in the prevention of fraud is important. It accepts that the auditor could make a more positive contribution even to the extent of shelving the long cherished principle of client confidentiality in favour of an element of whistle blowing. Where it draws the line, though, is over the implication that the auditors must also assume the mantle of adviser and confessor to the supervisory authorities.

To assume that the auditors can perform a supervisory role under vaguely drafted legislation is misguided and not only fails to acknowledge the auditors' strength as reviewers of historical information but also fails to accept weaknesses in a current auditing regime which does not spell out clearly enough the responsibility for directors to maintain appropriate accounting and reporting controls.

On some issues the accountancy profession has been backward in coming forward, but on the question of supervision its reluctance to accept the proposals is based on the practicalities of such a role.

Instead of a vague suggestion that the auditors might monitor client behaviour and report any dubious incidents or transactions to the supervisory authorities the institute believes that attention should focus more specifically on more effective auditing practices and a clear definition of the duties of directors to establish and maintain adequate systems of control.

That kind of system has worked within the insurance industry where special audited reports and statements have to be submitted to the Department of Trade.

If the Government insists on this extended supervisory role for the auditors all that will happen is that the individual firms will not accept the risk and simply turn down the business. They will deal only with the bluest chip clients leaving the gap for the less scrupulous accountants to fill.

Billions wiped off shares as world follows Wall St dive

By William Kay, City Editor

Billions of pounds were wiped off the world's stock markets yesterday after fears of an interest rate war.

The panic was sparked in New York on Wednesday, when an unexpected fall in US unemployment led to speculation that the Reagan administration would have to maintain high interest rates to prevent the economy from overheating.

That produced a record fall of 39.1 in Wall Street's Dow Jones index. As stock markets opened yesterday, beginning in the Far East, the shock waves produced a domino effect.

By London's turn, dealers decided that shares could go only one way. The FT-SE 100 share index opened 24.3 down at 1,379.9, and this was quickly mirrored by the 30-share index. Its first reading, at 10am,

showed a drop of 16 to 1,107.8.

There was a recovery in the next hour, but then the market was rocked by Mr Michael Heseltine's resignation. Selling became intense, taking the FT-SE down 27.5 at one time before closing down 24.4 at 1,379.8.

The 30-share index closed 17.7 off at 1,106.1, its biggest fall since December 2. This index is at its lowest since November 20.

Falls were spread across the board. Dealers said the indexes would have been lower but for Distillers, buoyed by the Argyl merger clearance, and Thorn EMI, which produced better-than-expected results.

Wall Street again picked up the mood, closing off an early rally to take the Dow Jones

another 13 points down to 1,513 by late morning.

Nerves were stretched by rumours in New York that Arab foreign ministers, meeting in Fez, might liquidate dollar holdings in retaliation against America's Libyan sanctions.

The outlook on Wall Street is for continued erratic swings, according to a *Times* survey of money managers there.

The pound held its ground well following Wednesday's rise in base rates, although it was helped by market suggestions that there may have to be a rise again. It gained 60 points to \$1.4490 against the dollar.

The pound initially rose sharply against the German mark, trading at DM3.57 during the morning. It later fell back to DM3.5425, still more than ½

picking up on the day, as dollar selling boosted the mark.

The sterling index rose 0.3 to 78.2, after reaching 78.4 during the morning.

In New York last night, the pound rose further to \$1.4580.

London money market conditions remained volatile and nervous. The three-month interbank rate moved half a point to 13½-13 per cent in early trading, before settling back to 13-12½ per cent.

Money market traders said the possibility of another UK base rate increase remained.

There was a record volume on the London International Financial Futures Exchange. All the major contracts had their heaviest trading to date, giving a total market volume of about 40,000 contracts.

Inmos may be sold to foreign company

By Ian Griffiths

Britain's microchip technology could fall into foreign ownership this year when Thorn EMI sells off all or part of its troubled Inmos subsidiary.

Thorn EMI's chairman, Sir Graham Wilkins, said yesterday that he had held discussions with several international companies about a possible partnership, none of which was British.

He said: "We are looking on a world-wide basis, but the likely partner is almost certainly not going to be British."

Sir Graham did not rule out a withdrawal from the business, although Thorn would prefer to retain a controlling interest in Inmos. He was unconcerned about any political repercussions of such a move since his responsibility was to his shareholders, he said later.

Thorn owns about 95 per cent of Inmos, which was acquired at a cost of £115 million. That included £95 million paid to the Government for its 76 per cent stake in July 1984.

One of the attractions of that deal for the Government was that it ensured that Inmos would remain British-controlled.

Since Thorn took control, Inmos has suffered a series of financial setbacks as a result of the world's decline in the microchip industry.

In the half-year to September 30, Inmos made a loss before interest of £12.5 million, compared with a £2.6 million profit a year earlier. It is still not breaking even on a day-to-day basis and is not expected to do so until June.

Once this breakeven position has been achieved, Thorn will step up its share disposal plans.

Thorn has rejected the idea of going it alone with Inmos since the cash requirements for developing and expanding the business are too high.

The problems at Inmos have hit Thorn hard and yesterday it reported a fall in interim pretax profits to £11.4 million from £40.2 million on sales of £1,533 million up from £1,436 million.

However, the company maintained its 5p interim dividend.

Times, page 17

Unemployment breaks trend with increase of 14,700

By David Smith, Economics Correspondent

Adult unemployment rose by 14,700 to 3,181,300 last month, against the favourable trend of the previous three months. The rate of unemployment rose from 13.1 to 13.2 per cent.

The rise was the biggest monthly increase since last April. Lord Young of Gifford, Secretary of State for Employment, said it was disappointing.

But Department of Employment officials do not believe the December rise heralds a new upturn in the jobless total.

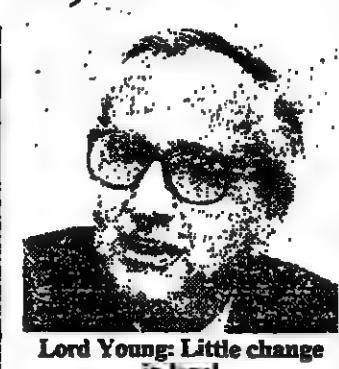
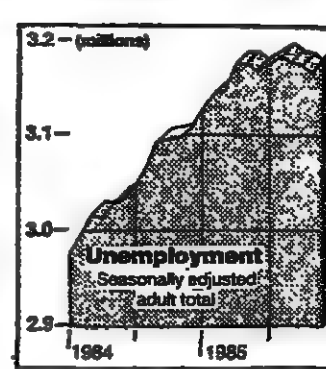
Lord Young said: "In the last six months there has been little change in the level of unemployment and it still appears that the trend is broadly flat."

The December unemployment figure, which was on December 12, may have been affected by the Christmas lull in recruitment, officials believe.

The count was closer to Christmas than usual.

This interpretation has some support from a 7,900 drop in vacancies, seasonally adjusted, to 162,100 last month.

The unadjusted unemployment total, including school leavers, rose by 14,221 to



Lord Young: Little change in level

employment increase in four months.

Mr John Prescott, Labour's Employment spokesman, said: "These are the highest December unemployment figures ever recorded... Britain starts 1986 with the highest interest, unemployment and inflation rates of our major competitors. Even the resignation of Cabinet ministers cannot disguise this deplorable record."

For the SDP, Mr Ian Wigglesworth, MP, spokesman on economic and industrial affairs, said: "These figures show that the Government's economic policy is in ruins."

Debt deadlock remains after Nigerian talks

By Richard Thomson, Banking Correspondent

Nigeria is still refusing to repay any of the £100 million in loans outstanding to Johnson Matthey Bankers until all fraud investigations relating to the loans are complete, despite a conciliatory meeting yesterday between Professor Bolaji Akinyemi, the Nigerian external affairs minister, and the Bank of England.

Mr Robin Leigh-Pemberton, Governor of the Bank, emphasized at the meeting that most of the JMB loans were not fraudulent, in an attempt to persuade Nigeria not to use the issue as an excuse for avoiding debt repayment.

The Bank is anxious to secure repayment for the loans as soon as possible to smooth the way towards selling off JMB to the private sector this year.

The meeting with Prof Akinyemi ended with a reaffirmation by the Bank and

Prof Akinyemi of the need for cooperation between the authorities in England and Nigeria to sort out the fraudulent loans.

Since the near-collapse of JMB in 1984 the Bank, which took over the running of the bank, has reduced the Nigerian loan book from about £120 million to £100 million. This is proportionately a much higher amount than with other British banks. But it also discovered that some of the loans were fraudulent.

Although the Bank has been cooperating with the Nigerian police since the middle of last year to uncover the full nature and extent of the fraud, the central bank of Nigeria is refusing to repay any of the loans.

Nigeria owes \$7 billion to British companies and the Export Credits Guarantee Department.

AirCal to buy £70m BAe jets

By Edward Townsend, Industrial Correspondent

British Aerospace yesterday announced another order, worth \$102 million (£70 million), for its increasingly successful 146 regional jet airliner.

The order, for six 146s, has come from AirCal, a competitor of Pacific Southwest Airlines, the California-based group which is already the biggest single overseas operator of the 146.

Both airlines operate from Orange County airport near Los Angeles where strict noise regulations have given the edge to PSA's 146 fleet and, according to Sir Raymond Lygo, BAe's chief executive, have hit the competition. The 146 is generally regarded as the world's quietest jet airliner.

Elders 'determined' to continue Allied fight

By Patricia Wheatcroft

Mr John Elliott, the chairman of Elders IXL, said yesterday that his company is determined to proceed with its battle for Allied-Lyons despite the delay caused by a Monopolies Commission investigation.

Mr Elliott returns to Australia today after a brief visit to London to supervise the progress of the £1.8 billion bid.

Elders has compiled a 350-page submission to the Monopolies Commission which details its own business, its plans for Allied and the intricate mechanism with which it intends to fund its proposed takeover.

It was this convoluted chain of Turka & Caicos Islands companies which raised questions in the City.

Mr Elliott says that there are no significant changes in his funding arrangements.

Replying to suggestions that Elders might turn its attention from Allied-Lyons to Courage, part of the Imperial Group under attack from Hanson Trust, Mr Elliott said that he looked at Courage some time ago and opted instead for Allied. "However, we are determined to get into the brewing business in Britain", he said.

Rival says Expressway plan could double in cost

By Jeremy Warner, Business Correspondent

Channel Expressway's £2.1 billion scheme for a four-bore rail and road tunnel under the Channel has been criticised in a seven-point letter to the Government from EuroRoute, a rival contender.

EuroRoute's £4.7 billion bridge and tunnel scheme is the only other of the four fixed link proposals that meets British demands for both a road and rail crossing.

The letter was sent after a number of reports suggesting that the British Government favoured the Channel Expressway option and arrived in time for yesterday's expected Cabinet discussion of the fixed link project.

EuroRoute said Expressway's scheme, first published in October 1985 and substantially modified two weeks later, had

not been through public consultation required by government guidelines for a link.

It said the real cost of Expressway's scheme might be more than double Expressway's estimate of £2.1 billion and the ventilation proposed in the road tunnel would not be sufficient.

A 31-mile road tunnel with no exits posed untold safety problems. It was not certain that the scheme's proposal for four bored tunnels would be geologically feasible, EuroRoute claimed.

The letter also questioned whether Channel Expressway could complete the link by 1991 as promised; whether the scheme could cope with expected growth in traffic levels; and whether drivers could cope psychologically with a 30-mile drive through tunnel.

STOCK MARKETS	
FT Ind Ord	1106.1 (-17.7)
FT Ind Share	689.26 (-10.78)
FT Govt Securities	81.19 (-0.37)
FT-SE 100	1379.8 (-24.6)
Dataseam USM	(-)
New York	
Dow Jones	1513.84 (-12.95)
Tokyo	
Nikkei Dow	13034.19 (-22.25)
Hong Kong	
Hang Seng	1798.51 (-28.33)
Amsterdam	
General	261.7 (-6.5)
Sydney AO	1043.8 (+2.4)
Frankfurt	
Commerzbank	3061.8 (-17.2)
Brussels	
General	782.84 (-12.17)
Paris CAC	276.2 (-4.1)
Zurich	
SKA General	n/a
GOLD	
London fixing	\$333.50pm-\$333.50
close	\$335.00-\$335.50 (\$231.25-281.75)
New York	Comex \$335.0

MARKET SUMMARY	
MAIN PRICE CHANGES	
REBS:	
Gold Petroleum	50p +10p
Westland	98p +10p
Lyle Shipping	12.50p +2p
Access Satellite	120p +15p
Grand Cent. Inv.	28p +3p
Daily Mail & Genl.	1450p +100p
Noble & Lund	74p +5p
Crystalline	158p +5p
Daily Mail "A"	1350 +100p
FALLS	
Alberts Drilling	18p -3p
Oceanics	32p -5p
Boustead	42p -6p
Selectv	7p -1p
Sovereign Oil	74p -10p
Adam Leisure	11.50p -1.50p
Ldn. & Os. Frigths.	2p -0.25p
Acom Computer	25p -4p
Peters Stores	54p -5p
Interview Video	4.50p -0.50p
Cristof	3p -1p
Bellor Oil	3p -1p
Wade Potteries	130p -13p
Munton Bros.	10p -1p
Humbertson Elin.	11p -1p
Bailey (G.H.)	23p -5p
Promotions House	24p -2p
New Court Wrl	25p -2p
Bedford (Williams)	98p -8p

CURRENCIES	
London:	
£ 1.4490 (+0.0080)	
DM 3.5428 (+0.0064)	
SwFr 3.0079 (+0.0100)	
FFr 10.8854 (+0.0171)	
Yen 282.54 (+1.15)	
Index 78.2 (+0.3)	
New York (today):	
£ 1.4510	
DM 2.4470	
£ Index 125.8 (+0.03)	
ECU 20.814790	
SDR 16.760285	
INTEREST RATES	
London:	
Bank Base:	12½%
3-month interbank:	13-12½%
3-month 90-day bill:	12½-12%
US:	
Prime Rate:	9.50%
Federal Funds:	7½%
3-month Treasury Bills:	7.19-7.17%
30-year bond price:	104½-104%

National Westminster Bank PLC

NatWest announces that with effect from Thursday, 9th January, 1986, its Base Rate is increased from 11.50% to 12.50% per annum.

All facilities (including regulated consumer credit agreements) with a rate of interest linked to NatWest Base Rate will be varied accordingly.

41 Lothbury London EC2P 2BP

STOCK MARKET REPORT

Shares in ragged retreat and indexes take a tumble

By Derek Pain and Cliff Feltham

Equities... and government stocks were in ragged retreat yesterday. Prices were marked down sharply over a wide front with many investors baffled and bewildered by the dramatic swing in sentiment.

On Friday, the market, as measured by the FT 30 share index, reached a new trading peak. Yesterday, with signs of panic selling, the index was down 17.1 at 1,106.1 point - its biggest fall since early December. At one time it was down 21 points.

According to Datastream calculations the slump wiped more than £4.2 billion from market value.

The FT 30 share index which embraced 100 shares, slumped 24.6 points to 1,106.1 point, one of the biggest falls in its history. Shares made several unsuccessful

The USM headhunting firm, Hoggatt Bowers, which has produced an 18 per cent jump in full year profits, is on the takeover trail. The chairman, Mr John Featherstone, has four targets under review although he warns he will not pay "fancy prices". He also is planning to open in the City to cash in on the booming transfer market caused by the big bang.

Attempts to rally during the day but each time prices perked up, the recovery was crushed by fresh waves of selling.

Government stocks, at one time down as much as 1%, did sustain a rally, finishing with falls of up to 1/2%.

The 1 per cent base rate increase may not be enough to defend sterling, some market men believe. With Wall Street's strength suddenly ebbing away and growing worries about oil prices, the market was ill-prepared for the resignation of Mr Michael Heseltine as defence secretary over the Westland wrangle.

Westland, ironically, was one of the few shares to fly against the trend. The shares jumped 18p to 96p as a large block, believed to be 4.4 million, went through the market at prices said to be in the 100p to 112p region. Rumours circulated say that one of the rival consortiums - or Mr Alan Bristow, who mounted a bid for Westland last year - were stake building to increase their voting power at next week's shareholders' meeting.

But few leaders escaped the

bloodbath. Mining signs extended into double figures although a few of the hard hit shares managed to struggle off their low points.

Distillers Co, on the clearance of the Agnif Group bid, achieved a 21p gain at £26p. Another FT 30 constituent, which helped cushion the index

Guinness's traditional dominance of the British stout market is under attack from Rothmans International, the tobacco group, and Heineken, the Dutch brewing group. A number of regional breweries are selling Beamish Irish stout (brewed by Beamish & Crawford of Cork, a Rothmans subsidiary) and in some cases draught Guinness has been removed from pubs. Murphy's stout, also brewed at Cork and backed by Heineken, is being pushed increasingly. Guinness, which last year improved its draught stout sales by 6 per cent, fell 4p to 299p yesterday.

fall was Thorn EMI, up 8p to 417p on its interim figures and subsequent analysts' meeting. Mr Robert Holmes a Court, the Australian entrepreneur who once had about 4 per cent of the group, has it seems, reduced his stake to a near nominal 110,000 shares.

Horizon Travel, where the Bass brewing group has 29 per cent, was unchanged at 100p as Australian based financier Mr Rod Brierley disclosed a 5.3 per cent shareholding. He has been stake building for about three months. Grand Metropolitan has about 4 per cent of the equity.

A few regional breweries progressed on takeover hopes, strengthened by the Distillers bid clearance. Vaux Breweries rose a further 18p to 38p. But Whitbread, as rumours circulated of more problems on its American side, fell 9p to 240p.

Insurances were hard hit. General Accident, which for the second time in three months is increasing its car insurance rates by about 6 per cent, fell 13p to 710p. Banks shaded a few poppers.

Ahead of figures due next week The Body Shop International fell 30p to 778p and

Bespak lost a further 6p to 100p on further consideration of its profits warning.

Associated Newspapers rose 45p to 970p on its results. The related Daily Mail & General Trust A shares improved 100p to £13.50p.

Unigate, the food group, continued to reflect Hillsdown

French Kier, the construction group. Acceptances coupled with shares picked up on the market enabled Beazer shares were 4p off at 462p while French Kier closed at 282p, down 1p on the day.

Coal Petroleum leaped 10p to 50p in oils after leading shareholders - Morgan Grenfell and Energy Recovery Investment Corporation - unveiled plans to sell their 41 per cent holding thereby posing the possibility of full takeover.

Plans by Egypt to cut the price of its crude oil unsettled the sector. BP fell 8p to 540p while Britoil came 2p off the top at 198p. Barmah lost some ground before recovery unchanged at 285p. Tricentral made some headway before finishing 1p down at 130p.

Valin Pollen, the public relations group, has seen profits by 87 per cent to £1.1 million and could achieve £1.7 million this year after goodwill payments, its broker James Capel & Co believe. There is a 2-for-one scrip issue. The shares fell 20p to 480p.

Meanwhile, one of VP's latest clients, the Stock Exchange, announced the launch of a communications programme about the big bang, more good news for VP.

Crystallite, the electronics group, went against the trend. The shares shot up 15p to 156p although they have fallen from 240p at one stage last year.

The company has suffered from a severe squeeze on its profit margins as its big customer, British Telecom, settled down after privatization.

The company has also been hit by the death of its popular chairman Mr John Leworthy, who masterminded the takeover of the Royal Worcester fine china business. The possibility remains that some market men are looking to the prospect of a bid for Crystallite now that such a key boardroom figure has gone.

More than 20,000 bargains were transacted on the London Traded Options Market yesterday. The Distillers Co, attracted 2,644 deals and Louth 2,462, but the most active counter was the Stock Exchange Index. It accounted for 3,323 bargains, nearly equally split between calls and puts.

RECENT ISSUES

	Closing	Price
Abbott Mead Vickers 5p Ord (180)	220-5	
Achley (Lauria) 5p Ord (135)	177-2	
Adair & Wireless 50p Ord (387 300p Pd)	284-4	
Chemistry Securities 50p Ord (52)	81-1	
Chart Facilities Lynch 5p Ord (84)	81-1	
Chetwood Streets 5p Ord (120)	120-5	
Clison & Eatin 10p \$0.05 75p Ord	83	
Companyst Mill 10p Ord (9 1/2)	86	
Cranes 5p Ord (74)	79-5	
Deane 25p Ord (120)	120-5	
Deane & Co 10p Ord (100 50p Pd)	84	
Dearye Surface 10p Ord (50)	80	
J S Pathology 10p Ord (150)	248-8	
Jacobs Vert 10p Ord (120)	122	
Lanczos Inc \$0.01 Capn 80k (115)	115	

MOTOR RALLYING

because of industrial action, but as it happened the weather would probably have prevented the game being played.

CRICKET

TCCB look ahead for tour alternatives and over their shoulder at W Indies

By John Woodcock, Cricket Correspondent

After Wednesday's night's cancellation of the England tour to Zimbabwe, the Test and County Cricket Board spent yesterday looking round for somewhere else for the B side to go when they have finished in Sri Lanka in the middle of next month. The Board will also be casting anxious glances towards the Caribbean, where the full England team are due to arrive a fortnight tomorrow.

Like the International Cricket Conference, the TCCB will see as their main priority not the cancellation of Bangladesh and Zimbabwe, however badly let down they may feel, but the greater need to keep the international game as intact as they can. They must be becoming increasingly worried about the possible domino effect of the decisions taken not so much by the cricketing authorities of Bangladesh and Zimbabwe as by their governments.

The viability of England's forthcoming tour to West Indies does not depend, unfortunately, upon the West Indian Cricket Board of Control, who are as keen as the TCCB that it should take place without let or hindrance. There, too, it is the politicians who decide these things, but in the five islands where England are due to play (Antigua, Barbados, Jamaica, St Vincent and Trinidad) the green light does still shine.

The most public threat at the moment comes from the militant trade unions in Trinidad, where an election is pending (in which apartheid is sure to be an issue) and two Test matches, a one-day international and a match against the local side are scheduled. This means four weeks in Port of Spain, and the airport workers there have already said they will not

handle the England team's baggage should Embury, Ochoa, Taylor and Willey be on board.

It was in 1981 that the ICC agreed unanimously upon the following resolution, which was duly inserted into the constitution: "The selection of teams is a matter entirely for the governing bodies of the countries concerned. The barring of individuals for political reasons by other governing bodies or governments cannot be allowed to interfere with such selections."

In 1983, again unanimously, it was agreed that this still applied, since when the resolution has not been questioned. Barbados and Zimbabwe, therefore, are indirect breach of ICC policy, much to the evident anguish of the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board, if not the Zimbabwe Cricket Union. I imagine the latter, in trying to put the blame for the collapse of the tour on the TCCB, feel it to be in their long-term interests not to be overtly critical of their government's intervention. The game is played in Zimbabwe almost exclusively by white men.

In Zimbabwe and Bangladesh the cause of cricket will have been set back. In each case the TCCB could have saved the day by obliging those players with South links (Ashley, Barnett, Moxon and Smith) put their names to the declaration demanded of them. Mercifully they applied no such pressure. Had they, it would have opened the door to all manner of further interference in team selection and meant their asking the players involved to desert themselves from pursuing their perfectly legitimate right to go to South Africa, in order to coach and

play there. At the moment something like one in four of all first-class cricketers in the English game spend their winters doing that.

It might be as well if the Cricketers' Association, a very cosmopolitan organization, asked each of its members to declare their abhorrence of apartheid. That would be instantly complied with. They are known to be keenly opposed to it, and any declaration referring to their coaching and playing in South Africa. The TCCB will have been grateful for the support of the Cricketers' Association as the game should be for their generally responsible attitude.

As a replacement for the England B side, India have offered tours in Zimbabwe. This reduces the chance of the B side themselves going to India. An extension of the Sri Lanka visit is a possibility for the B side, though that might be as the third side in a triangular tournament with Pakistan. The tour to Australia is also being taken in Australia as to the possibility of the B side playing some matches there. The Benson and Hedges one-day competition between Australia, India and New Zealand ends on February 11, though from February 21 to March 3 the states will be occupied with the Sheffield Shield.

The complexities of the situation outthere the permutations open to the England B side. Will Sri Lanka, for example, when England arrived yesterday to a warm welcome, be excluded from playing in Zimbabwe? Whether they are or not, they can be sure of a royal reception in England next year.

Rain spoils Crowe's fine effort

Melbourne (Reuters) - The opening match in the World Series Cup one-day triangular tournament between Australia and New Zealand was abandoned as a draw yesterday after heavy rain. New Zealand scored 161 for seven off 29 overs when the depressing weather won the day. Each side receive one point.

The 30 overs-a-side match had earlier been reduced to a maximum of 32 for each team because of rain. New Zealand were 161 for seven off 29 overs when the depressing weather won the day. Each side receive one point.

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South Africa 'plan to split the ICC'

From Ivo Tennant, Cape Town

South Africa is attempting to regain its place in the international game by causing a split between the member countries of the ICC, according to a report in the South African Cricket Board (SACB) executive member said yesterday.

Hova was speaking at the West Indian tour of South Africa, which is being held in the country's southern province of Natal. He said the SACB was planning to split the ICC into two groups, one for the white players and one for the black players. He said the SACB was planning to split the ICC into two groups, one for the white players and one for the black players.

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Brown stays on as manager

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BOXING

Threat will not stop Bruno bout

Frank Bruno's March bout in London against white South African heavyweight Gerry Coetzee will definitely go ahead, despite the latest threat to disrupt this year's Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh.

Concise, Texan, president of the Union of African Sports Confederations, yesterday called on British boxing authorities to call off the bout or accept the consequences. "If Bruno allows the planned bout to go ahead, the Afro-Asian and Latin American members of the Commonwealth must show determination and boycott the games," he said.

Mike Barrett, who is promoting the Bruno-Coetzee contest at Wembley on March 4, said: "Quite frankly, this man is a blackmailer. Gerry Coetzee is a boxer, not a politician. The fight will go on, make no mistakes about that."

Ray Clarke, secretary of the British Boxing Board of Control, pointed out: "Other professional sportsmen from South Africa are allowed to come here and compete. If golfers and tennis players are allowed, why not boxers?"

He said the South African sportsman from going anywhere? It is tantamount to threatening Bruno's livelihood. If he is prepared to fight a South African boxer, then why not? We accept any boxer, black or white, from anywhere in the world to fight here."

Kenneth Borthwick, chairman of the Commonwealth Games organising committee, yesterday issued a statement saying: "The official policy of the Commonwealth Games organising committee is to uphold the terms of the Glenageary Agreement, which bans sporting links with South Africa. All members of the Commonwealth are fully aware of our consistent stand in this matter."

Pat Cowdell, knocked out in one round by Amunah Nelson in his last bout, said he would not fight Coetzee. "I would have done our cricket good but it would have ended apartheid," he said.

The SACB placed an advertisement in a Dublin newspaper urging non-white cricketers to join the international between South Africa and the breakaway Australians.

confidence by members, but he agreed to go on for the seventh round after meeting with the club at Edgworthstown on Wednesday night.

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SNOOKER

Mountjoy makes his third century break

By Sydney Friskin

Doug Mountjoy stole some of the glamour from Cliff Thorburn by making a clearance break of 109 in their Mercantile Credit Classic semi-final at Warrington yesterday. At the interval in this best-of-17-frames match, Thorburn led 5-2.

Mountjoy, albeit temporarily, was monarch of all he surveyed as he put together his third century break of the tournament. This enabled him to reduce the lead to 4-2. Thorburn having gained early ascendancy by winning the first three frames, he snatched the first on the black ball, after Mountjoy had failed to pot it and established the third with a clearance break of 54.

Mountjoy dominated the fourth frame and was on his way to recovery in the fifth but missed the black after potting the last red and conceded when Thorburn tightened his grip. Thorburn increased his lead by winning the seventh frame but the story might have been different for Mountjoy had he not missed the black when he attempted to pot the pink into a side pocket.

At that stage Mountjoy led 36-30.

Thorburn moved on to a state-of-hard-earned prosperity. He failed to pot an easy blue and left it for Mountjoy who followed up the pink only to leave the black hanging over a pocket at the top of the table. In sheer disgust he conceded the frame.

Rex Williams, who has been a professional for 35 years, is delighted and a little bewildered by his achievement in reaching the semi-finals and is looking forward to meeting Jimmy White today.

He beat Alex Higgins 5-3 in the quarter-final round of that tournament and played exceptionally well on Wednesday night to defeat him 5-2 in the Mercantile Credit Classic quarter-final, an event slightly soured by Higgins who launched a tirade against the press and threatened to "blow the game inside out".

As chairman of the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association, Williams did not take Higgins' outburst too seriously, saying: "I don't think it's a very nice thing to say, but it's not a very nice thing to say."

He said he was looking forward to meeting Jimmy White today. He beat Alex Higgins 5-3 in the quarter-final round of that tournament and played exceptionally well on Wednesday night to defeat him 5-2 in the Mercantile Credit Classic quarter-final, an event slightly soured by Higgins who launched a tirade against the press and threatened to "blow the game inside out".

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GOLF

Lyle's costly error

From John Ballantine, Carlsbad, California

Playing the wrong ball is the ultimate mistake in golf, rather like kicking the ball past your own goalkeeper in football. Sandy Lyle, the Open champion and usually the most accurate of players, committed the grievous error on the par four 447 yard 10th in the first round of the Tournament of Champions, and it probably cost him the lead.

Lyle's creation of 70 combined six birdies and kept him strongly in contention only two behind the leaders, Calvin Peete and Mark McCumber, but how different it might have been if he had not made that error.

"My drive hit a tree and the ball dropped into tall rough," Lyle recalled. "A steward put a white marker stick by a ball and I just didn't check the number closely enough."

"Of course, when I looked at it near the green I saw straightaway that it was a lost ball and not mine," he continued. "I had to take a two stroke penalty and I was out of contention. I should still have had the six which would have tied me for the lead but I three putted from one yard."

Lyle ultimately scored three birdies to get back into the race for the first prize of \$52,000. This was a mark of his new determination and maturity, and no doubt he will make the same mistake again. "I can't remember ever doing it before, even as an amateur," he said.

Bernhard Langer had five birdies, including a 12 footer smoothly made at the last green, in his 69.

RACING: WINTER'S STAR CHASER TO DEFTY TOP WEIGHT IN ASCOT FEATURE

Talented Brown Chamberlin can underline Cup chance

By Mandarin

Brown Chamberlin, who ran an outstanding race after a 20-month lay-off at Cheltenham last month, can put himself in the forefront of the Gold Cup picture by defying top weight in the Green Highlander Handicap Chase at Ascot today.

Two seasons ago, Brown Chamberlin was one of the leading chasers in the country, winning the Hennessy with 11st 8lb and chasing home George and Burrough Hill Lad in the Gold Cup when both those horses were at their peak. Leg trouble kept Fred Winter's star off the course for the whole of last season but he showed no signs of the problem when making a splendid reappearance at jumping's headquarters five weeks ago.

Despite looking understandably backward in condition, Brown Chamberlin jumped with great zest and matched strides with the much fitter Run and Skip until approaching the last fence where lack of a recent outing began to tell. Close home, Brown Chamberlin forfeited second place to Elmboy, who, like Run and Skip, was having his third race of the season.

The subsequent victories of Run and Skip at Chesham and Sandown have shown that Brown Chamberlin was attempting the almost impossible in trying to concede 20lb to John Spearling's progressive young chaser, Knock Hill, a distant fourth at Cheltenham. It was a feat which the form a handsome filly by winning the four-mile chase there last week.

Brown Chamberlin has been steadily supported for the Gold Cup in the last week but 16-1 is still available and with the race looking exceptionally open, that represents better value than those at the head of the market. An authoritative victory today would see those odds halved and I hope to see him produce exactly that.

Western Sunset has a touch of class but has yet to win at

Course specialists

ASCOT
TRAINER'S 5 Males 7 winners from 20 runners, 25.0% (1st 21, 22.0%, 2nd 21, 22.0%, 3rd 21, 22.0%, 4th 21, 22.0%, 5th 21, 22.0%, 6th 21, 22.0%, 7th 21, 22.0%, 8th 21, 22.0%, 9th 21, 22.0%, 10th 21, 22.0%, 11th 21, 22.0%, 12th 21, 22.0%, 13th 21, 22.0%, 14th 21, 22.0%, 15th 21, 22.0%, 16th 21, 22.0%, 17th 21, 22.0%, 18th 21, 22.0%, 19th 21, 22.0%, 20th 21, 22.0%, 21st 21, 22.0%, 22nd 21, 22.0%, 23rd 21, 22.0%, 24th 21, 22.0%, 25th 21, 22.0%, 26th 21, 22.0%, 27th 21, 22.0%, 28th 21, 22.0%, 29th 21, 22.0%, 30th 21, 22.0%, 31st 21, 22.0%, 32nd 21, 22.0%, 33rd 21, 22.0%, 34th 21, 22.0%, 35th 21, 22.0%, 36th 21, 22.0%, 37th 21, 22.0%, 38th 21, 22.0%, 39th 21, 22.0%, 40th 21, 22.0%, 41st 21, 22.0%, 42nd 21, 22.0%, 43rd 21, 22.0%, 44th 21, 22.0%, 45th 21, 22.0%, 46th 21, 22.0%, 47th 21, 22.0%, 48th 21, 22.0%, 49th 21, 22.0%, 50th 21, 22.0%, 51st 21, 22.0%, 52nd 21, 22.0%, 53rd 21, 22.0%, 54th 21, 22.0%, 55th 21, 22.0%, 56th 21, 22.0%, 57th 21, 22.0%, 58th 21, 22.0%, 59th 21, 22.0%, 60th 21, 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FOOTBALL: SUPER LEAGUE PLAN REVEALS AS LEADING CLUBS SEE CHANCE TO SEIZE MORE POWER

Breakaway less likely after second division clubs meet

By Stuart Jones, Football Correspondent

The threat of England's leading clubs breaking away to form their own so-called "Super League" has receded still further. The second division club chairmen yesterday agreed with the proposals that had been suggested by their first division colleagues and the changes are expected to be approved at an extraordinary general meeting to be held probably early in February.

The recommendations include a gradual reduction of the first division, a series of play-offs for promotion from the second division, a reorganisation of finance, a cut in the Football Association's share of the FA Cup pool and, significantly, a change in the voting procedure. The alterations would be carried out over the next two years.

After the two-hour meeting at Lancaster Gate, Ron Noades, the chairman of Crystal Palace and the spokesman for the second division, said: "Promotion and relegation will be as usual this season. For the next two seasons, two clubs will go up from the second division and three will go down from the first."

"It will mean that there will be an odd number of clubs in the top two divisions for one season but, after two years, we shall get down to the required 20 in the first and 24 in the second. After that, it will be three up and three down."

"The third team in the second division would play off for the last promotion place with the fourth, fifth and sixth teams in the division. The play-offs will take one of two forms. They will be either a mini-league of four clubs or a straight

knock-out of two semi-finals and a final."

Mr Noades also confirmed that his colleagues had agreed to reduce the FA's share of the Cup pool from 33 per cent to 20 per cent. Yet the change in the voting rules, which would effectively double the strength of the first division, remains the most controversial and important topic.

At present, each of the clubs in the top two divisions each holds one vote. Under the new structure, the first division clubs would each hold two, those in the second division one each and those in the third and fourth as now, eight between them. The first division, with 40, would thus hold the balance of power.

Mr Noades is to contact Philip Carter, the chairman of Everton and the first division's spokesman, to inform him of the meeting. "I am sure that now there is no question of the big clubs breaking away," he said. The chairman of the third and fourth divisions are also to hold their own discussions.

The prospect of the top Scottish clubs peeling away has also slightly diminished. Talks between the 23 members of the top two divisions in Glasgow yesterday ended with the hope of a reconciliation between the nine clubs that are dissatisfied with the present structure and the rest.

Jack Steedman, a director of Clydebank, said: "The management committee will now prepare a document for discussion with representatives of the nine clubs and will seek to meet with them at an early date under the chairmanship of David Wall, the president of the Scottish Football Association."

Plea for 'sin bins'

A "sin bin" for instant punishment of offenders and the introduction of a 10-yard penalty for dissent at free-kicks were among proposals discussed when representatives of the players, referees, Football League and managers and secretaries met in Manchester yesterday.

There is concern in the game because already this season more than 120 players have been sent off, compared with 165 for the whole of last season.

Gordon Taylor, the FFA secretary, said: "We are looking for a more sensible attitude from referees and fitnessmen."

"We have discussed what works in other sports such as the 10-yard penalty and 'sin bins'. The game is definitely getting faster and it may be opportune to look at instant punishment."

Neville Ashley, the referees' spokesman, said: "The game is certainly getting faster and incidents are being exaggerated because of the speed."

"Possible rule changes will have to be considered by the FA technical committee before it is decided whether or not to pass them to the International Board for consideration."



Saving face? Hodge (left) claims he was mistaken for Walters (right)

Money for Rochdale Sharp's the word for two years

By Peter Ball

Manchester United.....2
Rochdale.....2

Against the League leaders, Rochdale could not manage the upset of the century. The fourth division team, however, left Old Trafford having earned at least grading respect for their prickly refusal to be overawed by Manchester United and, equally important, around £40,000 to keep them going for a while.

Ironically, the twice-postponed tie was played in excellent conditions, nature's thaw having proved more effective than United's. The delay had not been long enough for any of United's injured to recover, so mark Higgins, the former Everton captain, was making his United debut two years after a pelvic injury had forced his retirement.

Higgins showed that he had lost none of his bite in the intervening period, being warned in the first minute for a tackle which left Thompson sprawling.

Spurred on by over 8,000 supporters - where do they go usually? - Rochdale's own tackling soon had its wild side as United pressed forward.

But the fourth division team were sadly undone by a basic error after only 15 minutes. Redfern's weak goal kick went straight to the lurking Stapleton, who held off Toole and drove it back over the goalkeeper from 25 yards.

With Hughes still searching for that elusive goal, United showed little imagination in dealing with the barbed wire tackling. A header from Stapleton was their subsequent threat to Redfern until the last minute of the half, when a splendid move by Gibson and Albiston ended with Stapleton's shot bouncing away off the bar.

Encouraged by their defensive success in the first period, Rochdale began to push forward on their own account in the second.

Moore appealed furiously for a penalty as he was balked trying to meet Grant's free kick. Before the hour Rochdale's first corner arrived and Cooke brought his aerial qualities forward to give Turner his first save.

United's response to that *illegitimate* was a spell of furious pressure, but they could not breach Rochdale's spirited resistance. As the game entered its final quarter United survived another scare as Turner dropped a cross under pressure from Taylor.

The closing minutes provided bitter-sweet moments for Hughes. Booked for a foul on Cooke, which means he will miss United's fourth round tie at Sunderland, he then found the goal which had been eluding him, turning home Blackmore's cross.

MANCHESTER UNITED: G. Turner; M. Duggan, A. Ashton, N. Whitham, M. Higgins, P. Thompson, J. Gibson, S. Stapleton, J. Cooke, K. Holt, S. Taylor, R. Moore, S. Seaman, S. Johnson, R. V. G. Collier (Subs).

Sharp Electronics will extend their sponsorship of Manchester United by two years.

The news provides football with a welcome commercial boost following Canon's decision earlier this week to end their sponsorship of the Football League.

The Sharp chairman, Isaki Mitsuda, said: "For the last four seasons we have developed strong and beneficial links with Manchester United. We have much in common. The club is the biggest and best in the country and is recognized and admired throughout the world."

"It is an ideal, successful partnership and I am confident that both the club and the sport will continue to show a good return for our support."

Mitsuda said: "We were not really interested in taking over sponsorship of the League because we believe we have got the best with the League leaders and that will be more beneficial to us."

It is understood that the new deal is worth £750,000 which, added to the £250,000 United received for its basketball team, makes it the biggest "double header" sponsorship with a sports club in the country.

Martin Edwards, chairman and chief executive of United, said: "At a time when soccer has not enjoyed the best start to a season, culminating in the recent loss of League sponsorship, this decision of Sharp Electronics is most welcome and encouraging."

Hodge to plead mistaken identity

Aston Villa are claiming a case of mistaken identity over the booking of Steve Hodge in the drawn FA Cup tie at Portsmouth, last Saturday.

Villa say the offence in question was committed by Mark Walters, who had already been booked and could face suspension if the appeal is upheld by the FA.

If Hodge's booking stands, he will pass 21 penalty points and incur a two-match ban which would keep him out of a League game against Luton Town and the Milk Cup quarter-final against Arsenal on January 22.

The FA will not ask the referee, Colin Downey, for his observations. He booked six players and sent off Portsmouth's Billy Gibson last weekend, but will not be in charge of the replay because of a pulled calf muscle.

It is the second time this season that a black player (Walters) and a white player (Hodge) have been involved in an appeal based on a plea of mistaken identity. Last month the Southampton winger Danny Wallace successfully protested that he had been booked against Newcastle United and the caution was transferred to Jimmy Case - who is still serving a two-match ban.

Last season Villa claimed that the forward Peter Withe was wrongly sent off at Ipswich Town. His second booking went instead to his team-mate Paul Rennie, who also collected a suspension for his honesty.

Glenn Hoddie (Ince), Graham Roberts (Andie) and John Chiedozie (Ince) all sustained injuries in the Villa win over Oxford United and are doubtful for tomorrow's League visit by Nottingham Forest.

Oxford also have injury problems with eight players, including Trevor Phillips, Brock and Briggs, ruled out of tomorrow's League visit by Manchester United.

Brighton yesterday signed Colin Hill, the Arsenal defender, on loan and he will play in tomorrow's second division match at Blackburn Rovers. Bob Latchford has joined Newport County on a month's loan from Lincoln City.

Wednesday's results

FA CUP: Third round replay Tottenham Hotspur 2, Ipswich Town 1. Tottenham away to Stoke City or North County.

FOOTBALL LEAGUE: Premier division 1. Arsenal 1, Tottenham 1. 2. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 3. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 4. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 5. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 6. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 7. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 8. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 9. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 10. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 11. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 12. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 13. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 14. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 15. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 16. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 17. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 18. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 19. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 20. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 21. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 22. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 23. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 24. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 25. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 26. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 27. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 28. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 29. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 30. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 31. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 32. Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. 33. 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